To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Reginald E. Murphy entitled "Perceptions of Stereotypes of Black Males in Television Situation Comedies." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communications.

Dr. Dhyana Ziegler, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

Perceptions of Stereotypes of Black Males in Television Situation Comedies

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Reginald E. Murphy
May 1994

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the late Mrs. Vermell S. Murphy, my mother. The one thing my mother told me she wanted to do was to see me graduate from college. Unfortunately mom has not been with me physically to see me graduate from undergraduate school at Appalachian State University and graduate school at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She passed away on November 22, 1989. She has, however, been with me spiritually every step of the way. I thank her for listening to my prayers and giving me inner-motivation during the times I thought about giving up. The hard work and sacrifices I made to finish six years of school and complete this thesis is dedicated to my mother. Mom, I will always keep my head up and always do my best.

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ABSTRACT

This research examined perceptions of stereotypes of Black males on television situation comedies. This pilot study was designed to discover information about stereotypes of Black males and generate questions to pursue for further research. The method of analysis for the research was two fold: Focus groups and survey research. The purpose of this study was to assess individual's perceptions of stereotypes of Black males on television situation comedies and examine how these perceptions relate to race, gender, socioeconomic status, social interaction with Black males, and time spent viewing Black males on television situation comedies. Twenty-three focus group participants were divided into three groups by race and gender and each group was led by a moderator through five components during a 2 and 1/2 hour session. The participants were administered a Perception Assessment Survey then a Pre-Test Questionnaire. After which, they viewed two 30-minute television situation comedies. The participants were then administered a Post-Test Questionnaire and led by the moderator in a open discussion. The participants were administered a Wrap-up Questionnaire and the end of the session. The research found that race, gender, social interaction with Black males and time spent watching Black males on television determined how the various focus group participants perceived Black males on television situation comedies.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> The more stereotypes become refined and rigid in the present setup of the culture industries, the less people are likely to change their preconceived ideas with the progress of experience. The more opaque and complicated modern life becomes, the more people are tempted to cling desperately to clichés which seem to bring some order into the otherwise un-understandable (Dates & Barlow, 1990).

In August 1967, President Lyndon Johnson formed The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, hereafter referred to as the Kerner Commission, to study the racial incidents that happened in American cities during the 1960s (Stroman, Merritt, & Matabane, 1988). In delivering its report in March 1968, the Commission cited the media as being one of several institutions responsible for producing the separation of Black and White Americans. The Kerner Commission specifically made the following recommendations regarding Blacks and television:

> Television should develop programming which integrates Negroes into all aspects of televised presentations. In addition to news-related programming, we think that Negroes should appear more frequently in dramatic and comedy series (Stroman, 1988).

As a result of this report, there was an increase in the number of Blacks on television (Stroman, 1988). This report generated a great deal of concern about the number of Blacks on television; however, some of the concern shifted to how Blacks were being portrayed when they were on television. In 1972, only four years after the Kerner Commission's recommendations, the Congressional Black Caucus delivered the following statements:

1) the social and occupational progress of blacks was being hindered by the negative stereotypes appearing on television;

2) negative stereotypes teach self-hate and consequent destructive self-images to blacks;

3) negative stereotypes create and reinforce the myth of white superiority.

Even though great strides were taken to increase the numbers of Blacks on television during this time period, the characters which they played, according to the Congressional Black Caucus still resembled Black characters from the original days of film and television. These three statements outline the possible consequences of such negative stereotypes continually being written into the scripts of Black characters on television and into the themes of shows starring Black actors.

Some research has suggested Blacks have gone through several stages on television: non-recognition, ridicule and regulation (Hobson, 1974). When television was first introduced, Blacks were not seen. After several years of seeing no Blacks, programs such as *Amos 'n' Andy* hit the airwaves. And in many ways, today the image of Blacks appears to be regulated by those who produce the programs. The consequences the Congressional Black Caucus discussed are these images and stereotypes that are created via the television. More severe consequences are audiences' perception of these negative stereotypes, especially non-Black audiences. How does mainstream White America view or perceive Black people? If television is a non-Black person's only link to Black people, where do they develop ideas and perceptions about Black people? Did television situation comedies such as *Good Times*, *What's Happening*, or *The Jefferson's*, create a positive image of Black families in the 1970s?

The creation of television has been the best invention since the creation of the wheel. It has the power and influence to present positive aspects of the world. However, television presents pictures and snapshots of the world. How does America process these pictures and snapshots into their minds? If one of these pictures or snapshots is a Black male performing a song on a music video with his hat on backwards, how does the viewer perceive this picture if they have little or no contact with Black males? Many people may

not interact with people from other cultures and races on a daily basis or in their lives in general. How then do these people formulate their ideas and opinions about other people different from them? The concern of the Kerner Commission and the Congressional Black Caucus is still relevant today.

The focus of the attention of the Congressional Black Caucus at that time was to address the perpetuation of stereotypes of Blacks as a whole. Since then researchers have concentrated on specific areas of Black stereotypes, such as, Black families, Black children, Black teenagers, Black women and Black men. The study of Black male stereotypes is probably one of the more important areas because the history of the stereotyping of Blacks has its roots in the treatment of Blacks, particularly men, during slavery. The foundation of many of the various 'types' of Black male characters, such as 'Sambo,' was developed in the early days of slavery during the many talent shows presented by the slave and plantation owners. The creation of various myths about Black men, such as being savage and ignorant made it much easier for these slave and plantation owners to rationalize and justify slavery and create comedy shows for their entertainment. Harriet Beecher Stowe's creation of *Uncle Tom* during the early 1900s created a stereotype that would gain momentum through the development of film and television. An examination of how these Black male characters evolved and developed throughout the years of Slavery, Reconstruction, and the early days of film and television would help one to understand why many Black male roles on television today appear to be modern versions of these negative characters.

Statement of the Problem

The perception of Black male stereotypes on television situation comedies is the primary focus of this study. A number of studies have concentrated this issue of the development of and perception of racial stereotypes of various groups of people,

specifically women and minorities. Most of this research, however, has focused on Black women, Black families, Blacks and Hispanics. Few, though, have concentrated primarily on Black males. There is a need to study perceptions of stereotypes of all groups of people. However, there is also a need to increase the amount of research on the specific topic of Black males. The purpose of this research was to focus on the perception of stereotypes of Black males on television situation comedies. This study devoted attention to examining the images and perceptions of Black male characters on television situation comedies. In the course of the study, relevant literature was examined and questions asked in an attempt to expose this area of perceptions of Black males on television, which in turn, could provide ideas and questions that could be used for further research. This study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the perceived image of Black male characters in television situation comedies?

2. How are Black male characters on television situation comedies perceived by Black males, Black females, White males, and White females?

3. Do Blacks and Whites perceive Black male characters on television situation comedies as positive or negative?

4. How does the perception of Black male characters on situation comedies relate to race, sex, socioeconomic status, social interaction with Black males, and the amount of time spent viewing Black males on television situation comedies?

5. How does the perception of Black male characters on television situation comedies relate to the overall perception Blacks and Whites have of Black males in general?

Method of Analysis

The study was designed to answer several research questions. The method used in this research was two fold: Focus groups and survey research. Three focus groups consisting of eight people per group were assembled. Each focus group session was lead by a moderator and consisted of five segments. First, participants were administered a perception assessment survey. Second, they were administered a Pre-Test questionnaire before they watched two 30-minute television situation comedies. The two television situation comedies they viewed were *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and *Martin*. An explanation of why these particular programs were used is explained in Chapter Three. See Appendix() for a synopsis of the particular episodes used in this study. After the participants viewed the two television programs, they were administered a Post-Test questionnaire. Fourth, the participants were then asked to answer several open-ended questions in a discussion format with the other group members. This segment was videotaped. Finally, the participants were administered a wrap-up questionnaire. The results of these five segments are located in Chapter Four.

Significance of the Study

The study of the perception of stereotypes of Black males is an area of research that has been explored. However, since television programs, mainly situation comedies, have increased in the past five years, it is time to analyze the effect these programs are having on today's society. Since every person in America does not come in contact with a Black male on a daily basis nor interacts with Black men, how then do they develop

their opinions and perceptions about Black Men. The television, more often than not, may be one of the primary elements in the development of their attitude towards and idea about Black males. Producers, directors, and executives that control what America watches on television, need information to base their decisions. Even though many writers and producers of today's programs about Black people are Blacks themselves, there is still a need for research about how people perceive the characters television creates. This study is designed to be a pilot study for further research. The goal of this research is to attempt to answer the aforementioned questions and develop more material and questions for further study.

Definition of Terms

Stereotype A standardized mental picture held in common by members of a group representing an oversimplified opinion, affective attitude, or uncritical judgment of a person, a race, an issue or an event. There are positive and negative stereotypes, however, this research focused on people's perception of negative stereotypes. Therefore referring to stereotypes in this manuscript will mean negative stereotypes.

Television Situation Comedy A television program generally scheduled for prime time television viewing hours (8pm-11pm) that is designed to be a humorous interpretation of an event that has taken place in the lives of the characters on the programs.

Organization of the Chapters

Presented in five chapters, this research assessed perceptions of stereotypes on television, examined perceptions of Black male characters of two television situation

comedies starring Black males in leading roles, and observed open discussion about perceptions of racial stereotypes on television.

Chapter One serves as an introduction to some of the issues involving television and stereotypes such as the history of stereotypes, specifically of Black males, audience perceptions of television programs about Blacks males, and the effects of culture on communication and perceptions of people of different races. The purpose and significance of the study are included with five research questions guiding the research. Definitions and key terms used throughout the manuscript are also defined in the chapter.

Chapter Two contains a review of related literature on stereotypes in television and film, perceptions of minorities on television, and the history of stereotypes.

Chapter Three details the methods used to conduct the research utilizing a focus group, Pre and Post test instruments, and an open and close-ended questionnaire.

Chapter Four presents the research findings which are divided into the five components of the focus group sessions.

Chapter Five contains Summary, Conclusions, Limitations, and Recommendations of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Effects of Television and Perceptions

The major focus of this study has evolved from the concern about how Blacks are portrayed and perceived in television. The study of racial stereotyping and perception of racial stereotypes is important because television is a source of information that influences the formation of attitudes toward the races, specifically minority groups through its characterizations of them (Reid, 1979). Black males in particular have had a terrible identity crisis on television. Even though there are more Black males in leading roles in popular programs today, the characters they play still resemble some of those from the early days of television. Not only the characters they play, but the situations that the characters are placed, the plots, and themes of the various programs deserve careful examination.

There is a body of research that suggest media does have an effect on people. Media, especially television has the power to influence decision making and idea formulation about different people. Even though this study will focus specifically on the socio-cultural impact of television, it is important to first understand the theories that serve as a background for current media effects research. Research on the effects of mass communication began after World War I with the "bullet theory" also referred to as the "hypodermic-needle theory." This theory presents the idea that the messages in the media have universal effects on the audience that is exposed to them. In other words, messages can be "shot in" to the audience, and they will be affected. This simplistic theory of the effects of mass communication has since been discarded by researchers (Severin & Tankard,1992).

The theory by which most researchers use as a foundation for studies on the effects of mass communication, especially television, is known as the cultivation theory. Researcher George Gerbner developed this theory while studying heavy and light television viewing. He argues that heavy television viewers tend to shape their reality of the world by the way it is portrayed on the tube. This theory has been criticized by other researchers who said that it does not take into account that television viewing has different outcomes for different social groups, hence there is no real across-the-board effect due to heavy television viewing. Gerbner's argument nevertheless stands to be given serious consideration because of how television has been proven to have cumulative effects over the time people are exposed to it (Severin & Tankard, 1992).

This study will attempt to discover more information about the influence of television on people's development of images and attitudes about other peoples, specifically Black males. Communication is a process that most researchers would argue as being very complex; however, when simplified it "is the act of transmitting information, ideas, and attitudes from one person to another" (Ziegler, 1991). Ziegler uses this definition as a basis to introduce the theory of "mass media enculturation." In the process of communicating, the source uses various symbols in forming messages. Ziegler notes that each person has a stored set of values, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes. The person receiving the message "processes" the message according to the organization of the message from the source and his or her own personal experiences, values, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes (Ziegler, 1991). Ziegler argues that during the communication process the arrangement of these symbols, values, beliefs, and ideas experienced by both the source and receiver affect how the information is being "processed." When cultural messages are transmitted, the process by which individuals process the information is called "mass media enculturation" (Ziegler, 1991).

This concept relates to this research because it focuses primarily on the transmission of messages about various cultures or ethnic groups and not "popular"

culture. Information, values, ideas, and attitudes about Black males transmitted by situation comedies is received by audience members who have had no direct contact or experience with Black males through this process of enculturation. Ziegler states that "enculturation can be positive or negative. It is positive when enculturation can be supplemented by education. Without education in this process, enculturation could be myopic and may result in the formation of negative stereotypes" (Ziegler, 1991).

The notion of media influencing and perpetuating stereotypes is a major element of this study. Stereotypes are very powerful images and complex in how they are formed. Implicit personality theories suggest that since people from different socio-cultural groups have limited amounts of information about each other, they need to fill in these "gaps" with inferences and generalizations. One researcher defined stereotypes as exaggerated beliefs about groups of people. Some social psychologists have explained stereotypes in terms of the way people mentally categorize and organize information. Other researchers have found that generalizations become stereotypes when there is a "lack of regard for differences within a stereotyped group" (Evuleocha & Ugbah, 1989). The Theory section of my literature review in the thesis will expand more on these theories and how this study will use them. For this proposal, the most important element of stereotyping that requires understanding is the research that has shown that television has a history of distorting the images of Blacks. It has been these distortions that have in a sense recreated and modified the already existing stereotypes. The manner in which people have been exposed to and have processed these stereotypes cannot be explained exactly by any one theory. Acknowledging that these stereotypes exist and remain due to the influence of television is the first step in understanding the purpose of this research.

History of Black Male Stereotypes

The study of racial stereotypes on television does not begin with the invention of the television. The roots of stereotypical Black characters, especially Black male characters go back to the days of slavery. Standardized images of slaves and their masters were created in the literature and theater of the Ante-bellum South. These first portrayals were used to justify slavery. In 1781 a black character named Sambo was introduced on stage in a play called *The Divorce*. He was played by white actors in blackface. Sambo never dressed well, never displayed any acceptable manners, never spoke with good English and was always dancing around and singing foolish songs(Dates & Barlow, 1990). The creation of and popularizing of the Sambo stereotypical character had significant social ramifications. Historian Joseph Boskin noted:

> Sambo was an extraordinary type of social control, at once extremely subtle, devious, and encompassing. To exercise a high degree of control meant also to be able to manipulate the full range of humor; to create, ultimately, an insidious type of buffoon. To make the black male into an object of laughter, and conversely, to force him to devise laughter, was to strip him of masculinity, dignity, and self respect. Sambo was, then, an illustration of humor as a device of oppression, and one of the most potent in American popular. The ultimate objective for whites was to effect mastery, to render the black male powerless as a potential warrior, as a sexual competitor, as an economic adversary (Dates & Barlow. 1990).

Throughout the early nineteenth century the image of the unintelligent, carefree, and irresponsible "Sambo" was used to control the image Whites perceived of Blacks and Blacks perceived of themselves. After Blacks became free and relocated to the North, White created another character, the "Coon," because they believed Blacks were becoming a threat to them. The "Coon" was a character that mocked the intelligence of Blacks. Now that Blacks had freedom, Whites wanted to continue to control them (Harris, 1992). These controls were strategically placed inside of the fabric of American society in the form of these stereotypes. Throughout the 1800s blackface comedy was popular entertainment. There were large troupes of actors performing imitations of

African American song and dance. They portrayed Black males as clowns and controllable subservient loyal slaves. 'Jim Crow' and Uncle Tom in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* are just a few of the many stereotypical Black male characters that became popular during the years before the Civil War.

New Black stereotypes emerged after the Civil War. They were simply revised versions of the Sambo. Some were faithful ex-slaves working as servants, such as 'Uncle Remus'. During the early days of film, Steppin' Fetchit and Bill "Bojangles" Robinson who played Uncle Bill in the old Shirley Temple movies were a couple of the faithful servant type of stereotypes that populated the silver screens (Douglas, 1987). Others were characterized like 'Gus' in D.W. Griffith's controversial film "Birth of A Nation": an ignorant, insolent Negro brute lusting for power and white women (Dates & Barlow, 1990). These stereotypes continued in the mostly white owned movie industry as Blacks also began to play these characters. It was after the Civil War that the "Mammy" emerged as a controller and dominator of the household. She was big, fat, and pitch black, void of her sexuality, and ugly. She was also loyal and protective over the White family. The "Pickaninny" was another stereotype of a wild, brutal, uncivilized Black child. These characters were created to control Blacks. Whites wanted to maintain the social system that they created a form of psychology slavery on Black people with these images (Harris, 1992). The stereotypes evolved from the meek servant to the mean brute. Although there were a few positive Black male characters that were portrayed in theater and in some literature, these original negative stereotypes perpetuated as the growth of mass media continued to exploit African American culture in the twentieth century.

Black Male Stereotypes on Television

When television began many Blacks thought they would be able to work in the medium free from prejudice and discrimination. They were sadly mistaken. During this

period Jim Crow Laws were still enforced, segregation was legal in most of the country, and whites owned, operated, and produced television programs. Some producers, such as Ed Sullivan and Steve Allen showcased Black performers on their variety shows and argued for more Blacks in television. Yet many other producers hired talented Black actors to play stereotypical characters. Black males played characters white audiences loved to laugh at and enjoyed watching. For example, characters such as the giggling 'coon', shuffling his feet and rolling his eyes had become a major part in a host of performances (MacDonald, 1983).

In 1951, the radio show *Amos 'n' Andy* was adapted for television. The radio program starred two White men who perpetuated the way Whites perceived Blacks by "talking and acting black." This radio program was very popular amongst White and Black audiences. However, MacDonald reminds us that the Black male characters played were the same minstrel stereotypes that have been perpetuated since slavery. "Amos Jones was a low key, compliant Uncle Tom...Andy was an easy going dimwit" and"...George 'Kingfish' Stevens...a scheming 'coon'" (MacDonald, 1983). The positive portrayals of Black males on various television programs does warrant attention. For example the *Nat King Cole Show*, *Mission Impossible*, and *I Spy* made progress in presenting positive images of their Black male characters. However, many such as the *Nat King Cole Show* did not last because many corporate sponsors were hesitant to back the show because of the fear that white audiences were not quite ready for a Black man to be portrayed as anything other than a singing clown or dancing Sambo (Staples & Jones, 1985).

This cycle of negative portrayals of Black males continued in television dramas, action and adventure shows, and situation comedies throughout the 70s and 80s. Many television critics such as Martha Bayles have questioned the redeeming values in Black male characters such as Fred in *Sanford & Son*, J.J. in *Good Times*, George in *The Jefferson's*, *Benson*, Webster, and Arnold in *Different Strokes* (Bayles, 1985). Bayles

suggests attempts to answer these types of questions are possible when there is more understanding of the evolution of Black male stereotypes. Some research suggests that television has stereotyped Black males into themes such as, the racist Black man, the ridiculed Black man, and the dominated and absent Black man. Television programs such as *Sanford and Son* and *The Jefferson's* portrayal of the Black males as the loud and obnoxious racist. Television shows such as, *Good Times* and *The Jefferson's* present a Black male character in a situation where he is continuously getting insulted and humiliated by a Black female. On *What's Happening* and a number of television programs, there is no Black man in the household, therefore, absent and irresponsible (Baptise, 1986).

Carolyn Stroman studied samples of all national network commercial television series containing regular Black characters that aired during prime time in the 1987-1988 Fall season. Characteristics of the individuals and types of roles played were the two types of variables coded. The study found that twenty years after the Kerner Commission's recommendations, more positive portrayals of Blacks were emerging (Stroman & Others, 1988). On the other hand some researchers contend that the roles Black characters play, especially Black males only reflect the roles they play in the larger society. One researcher suggests that the role of a Black male in the media today "can be succinctly categorized in two ways: to serve whites or to support whites" (Douglas, 1987). Many of the jobs Black males find themselves on television are merely jobs serving Whites where they used to place Blacks during the days of slavery. For example, Black males have been placed in roles where they receive a great deal of attention, such as in *Miami Vice*. Philip Michael Thomas plays a detective next to Don Johnson. T.C.'s role in *Magnum P.I.* was to play next to detective Magnum. These roles were not "Coon-like", however, they were not the lead, which is a problem many Black males are finding on television today (Douglas, 1987).

Summary

Since slavery, Blacks have been stereotypes in this country. From the "Sambo" to the "Coon" and from J.J to Martin, Black males have been stereotyped throughout history. The few positive roles Black males have had such as Sidney Poiter's role in the original movie *In the Heat of the Night*, have been overshadowed by the negative portrayals in television situation comedies. In this research's quest to discover new information about how people perceive these stereotypes, an understanding of how these stereotypes of Black males have developed is needed. The literature suggests that there has been an evolution of the stereotype of Black males in film and in television. Specifically on television situation comedies are Black male stereotypes more evident. After the Kerner Commission released its report concerning race relation and the media, there have been a number of television programs about Blacks and featuring Black actors in lead roles aired on Network television. Black America was first concerned with the quantity of Black shows on television, however, progress still needs to made on the quality of these programs.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The primary purpose of this study is to gather, explore and discover more information concerning how Black males are perceived on television. The method of analysis for this pilot study is two fold. The research will use a qualitative research method known as a focus group to collect information and closed-end questionnaires. The quantitative measurements involved, for example, pre and post television viewing session questionnaires, are designed to assess participants' perceptions of television. The focus group method was chosen because this study was conducted as a qualitative fact-finding mission. Quantitative and qualitative research are each valid approaches to research. Since this study of perceptions of Black male stereotypes is a pilot study, the goal is not to test theory but to build upon existing theory. The goal is to find explanations to particular phenomena and generate more information, such as how individuals perceive Black males on television. The aim of pilot studies is to ask questions that will generate more questions to ask, thereby creating more information to develop into more extensive quantitative research projects.

A host of quantitative and qualitative research has been conducted on the effects and impact of the stereotypes of minorities television. However, this study will focus primarily on Black males that have reoccurring lead roles on primetime situation comedies. This study will wrestle with the following questions:

1. What is the perceived image of Black male characters in television situation comedies?

2. How are Black male characters on television situation comedies perceived by Black males, Black females, White males, and White females?
3. Do Blacks and Whites perceive Black male characters on television situation comedies as positive or negative?
4. How does the perception of Black male characters on television situation comedies relate to race, sex, socioeconomic status, social interaction with Black males, and the amount of time spent viewing Black males on television situation comedies?
5. How does the perception of Black male characters on television situation comedies relate to the overall perception Blacks and Whites have of Black males in general?

Focus Groups

Twenty-four individuals were selected to participated in the study. These people were divided into three Focus Groups consisting of eight people per group. The groups were created based on race and sex. Group A consisted of four Black females and four Black males. Group C consisted of four White females and three White males, one White male participant did not attend the session. Group B was a mixture of both races and sexes, two Black females, two Black males, two White females, and two White males. The participants were be selected from the students, faculty and staff population at The University of Tennessee and Pellisippi State Community College.

A rigorous attempt was made to select individuals from a variety of backgrounds. The selection of participants was based on the following criteria: age, race, classification, time spent viewing television, and availability in the evening hours. See Focus Group

Screening Questionnaire in Appendix A. In oder to create a mixed group of participants the researcher searched for participants in the following ways:

1). Placed classified advertisement in the *Daily Beacon.*
2). Placed flyers in and around the University Center and bulletin boards.
3). Talked with people as they walked through lounging areas of the University Center.
4). Sent letters and flyers to various university clubs and organizations.
5). Sent letters and flyers to residence hall personnel.

Moderator

One moderator was selected to lead the groups. Only one was chosen in order to be as consistent as possible in each of the sessions. This individual White male was selected from the Graduate Department in the College of Communications. He was chosen because of his communication skills in working with various groups of people in clubs and organizations such as, Student Government Association and his fraternity. The moderator was given an orientation to the study and trained. There was no real rational in choosing a White male as the moderator. The researcher concluded that the risk of bias a White person would have in leading the groups was lower than the risk of bias a Black person would have since the study is concerning Blacks.

FOCUS GROUP DESIGN

The focus group sessions were organized in five sections. The participants were first administered a perception assessment survey designed to assess research questions relating to perception of television characters. Second, a Pre-Test questionnaire was administered to the participants prior to their viewing of two 30-minute situation comedies designed to assess their perception of the programs they were going to view. The two programs used in the session were, *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and *Martin.*

These two particular programs were chosen because they both feature a Black male in the leading role on programs and the majority of the plots of the stories are centered around them. The episode of *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* is about Carlton's struggle to manager the school's snack bar after Will quits working. The episode of *Martin* is about Martin's reluctance to marry Gina. See complete sysopsis of programs in Appendix K. At the completion of viewing each program, participants were administered a Post-Test questionnaire designed to assess their reaction to the programs and perceptions after viewing. The fourth segment of the session was an open-ended question discussion with the paticipants in each group. This segment was videotaped to assess the participants' responses and nonverbal information. Finally, the participants were administered a Wrap-Up survey at the end of the session to assess their perceptions of the television characters, Will from *The Fresh Prince* and Martin from *Martin.*

Each focus group member received fifteen dollars for participating in the focus group session which lasted approximately 2 1/2 hours each. Each participant signed an informed consent form which contained an agreement of the confidentiality of the study.

Research Control

This study was prepared and conducted with procedures designed to reduce bias and outside influences. Each session was closely monitored. The sessions were held in a quiet room of the library on the campus of the University of Tennessee. The researcher created a relaxed atmosphere and was uninterrupted by outside sourses. The sessions were conducted during a convenient time of the day and a day of the week for the participants. The participants were asked not to discuss the study with anyone until all the sessions are complete. Each participant was given a general overview of the purpose of the study, however they were not told the title of the study until the focus group sessions commenced. None of the participants was told specifically the primary research questions. The participants were given the option on their informed consent form to

request a copy of the results. Each participant was given a thorough explanation of what was to take place during the session. Every participant was aware of the procedures in which the sessions operated. The researcher did not moderate any of the sessions.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The results of this study are organized in this chapter in four sections. Section One includes data from the Perception Assessment Survey. Section Two contains information from the Pre-Test Questionnaire administered before the participants viewed the focus group television programs. Section Three is material from the Post-Test Questionnaire administered after the participants viewed the focus group television programs. Section Four contains data from the videotaped discussion segment of the three focus group sessions. Section Five consists of data derived from the Wrap-Up Questionnaire administered at the end of each focus group session. The results are categorized in the following manner on each table by race, gender, and by total group responses.

Section One
Perception Assessment Survey

Table 1 describes the demographics of the participants. Sixty-six percent of Black females in the study were between 18-24, 17% between 25-35 and 17% between 36-45. None were over 45 years old. Fifty percent of Black males in the study were between 18-24 and 50% were between 25-35. None were over 36 years old. Overall, 59% of Black participants were between 18-24, 33% between 25-35 and 8% between 36-45. None were over 45 years old. One-half (50%) of White females were between 18-24 and 17% between 25-35, 36-45 and over 45, respectively. Sixty percent of White male participants were between 18-24, 20% between 25-35 and 20% between 36-45. None were over 45 years old. As a group, 55% of Whites were between 18-24, 18% between 25-35, 18%

Table 1
Number and Percent of Participants by Age

	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
Age Groups	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Under 18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18-24	4	66	3	50	7	59	3	50	3	60	6	55	7	58	6	55	13	57
25-35	1	17	3	50	4	33	1	17	1	20	2	18	2	17	4	36	6	26
36-45	1	17	0	0	1	8	1	17	1	20	2	18	2	17	1	9	3	13
Over 45	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16	0	0	1	9	1	8	0	0	1	4
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	12	100	23	100

between 36-45, and 9% over 45. Fifty-eight percent of Females were between 18-24. There were 17% between 25-35, 17% between 36-45 and 8% over 45. Fifty-five percent of the Male participants were between 18-24, 36% between 25-35, and 9% between 36-45. None were over 45 years old. Overall, 57% of the participants were between 18-24, 26% between 25-35, 13% between 36-45 and 4% over 45. This data indicates the majority of the participants in the study were between 18-24.

Table 2 shows the age of the participants by groups. Almost two-thirds of Group A were between 18-24, 37.5% between 25-35. None were older than 35 years old. Half of the participants in Group B were between 18-24, 25% between 25-35, and 25% between 36-45. None were over 45 years old. Fifty-eight percent of Group C were between 18-24, 14% between 25-35, 36-45, and over 45 respectively. This data indicates the majority of participants in each group were between 18-24 years old.

Table 3 shows the classification of the participants by their year in school and profession. Seventeen percent of the Black females were Sophomores, 33% Juniors, 17% Seniors, and 17% Working Professionals. None were Freshman. One half of the Black male participants were Graduate Students, 33% Juniors and 17% Seniors. None were Freshman or Sophomores. Altogether 8% of Blacks were Sophomores, 33% Juniors, 17% Seniors, 33% Graduate Students and 9% Working Professionals. None were Freshman. Thirty-three percent of White females were Sophomores, 33% were Seniors, 17% Graduate Students, and 17% Working Professionals. None were Freshman. Sixty percent of the White males were Freshman and 40% Working Professionals. None were Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors, or Working Professionals. The total White Freshman were 27%, White Sophomores 18%, White Seniors 18%, Graduate Students 10%, and Working Professionals 27%. Twenty-five percent of all Females were Sophomores, 17% Juniors, 25% Seniors, 17% both Graduate Students and Working Professionals. None were Freshman.

Table 2
Number and Percent of Participants' Age by Group

	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Under 18	0	0	0	0	0	0
18-24	5	62.5	4	50	4	58
25-35	3	37.5	2	25	1	14
36-45	0	0	2	25	1	14
Over 45	0	0	0	0	0	14
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100

Table 3
Classification of Participants by Student & Working Professional

	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
Class	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Freshman	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	60	3	27	0	0	3	27	3	13
Sophomore	1	17	0	0	1	8	2	33	0	0	2	18	3	25	0	0	3	13
Junior	2	33	2	33	4	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	17	2	18	4	17
Senior	1	17	1	17	2	17	2	33	0	0	2	18	3	25	1	10	4	18
Graduate Student	1	17	3	50	4	33	1	17	0	0	1	10	2	17	3	27	5	22
Working Professional	1	17	0	0	1	9	1	17	2	40	3	27	2	16	2	18	4	17
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

Twenty-seven percent of Males were Freshman, 18% Juniors, 10% Seniors, 27% Graduate Students, and 18% Working Professionals. None were Sophomores. Thirteen percent of the total participants were Freshman, 13% Sophomores, 17% Juniors, 18% Seniors, 22% Graduate Students, and 17% Working Professionals. This data would suggest the participants were a mixture of students from all classes and working professionals.

Table 4 shows the participants' classification by group. Seventy-five percent of Group A consisted of Juniors and Graduate Students, 25% were Sophomores and Seniors. None were Freshman or Working Professionals. Twenty-five percent of Group B were Freshman and Juniors, 50% Seniors and Graduate Students, and 25% Working Professionals. Fifty-eight percent of Group C were Freshman and Working Professionals and 14% were Sophomores, Seniors, and Graduate Students respectively.

Table 5 shows the participants' family's income last year. Fifty percent of Black females family's income ranged between $35-$50,000, 33% between $15-$25,000 and 17% over $50,000. None earned less than $15,000. Two-thirds of Black males' families earned over $25,000 and one-third under $25,000. One-half of the total Black participants' families earned over $35,000, 25% between $15-$25,000, 17% between $25-$35,000, and 8% less than $15,000. Two-thirds of White females' families earned over $35,000 and one-third less than $35,000. Sixty percent of White males' families earned over $50,000 and 40% earned less than $35,000. Overall 46% of Whites' families earned over $50,000, 36% between $25-$50,000, and 18% less than $15,000. Forty-two percent of all Females families earned between $35-$50,000, 25% over $50,000, 17% $15-$25,000, and 8% less than $15,000. Forty-five percent of the Male participants' families earned over $50,000, 27% between $25-$35,000, 27% less than $20,000. Thirty-five percent of the total participants' families in the study earned over $50,000, 22% between $35-$50,000 and 43% less than $35,000. This data suggests the majority of the

Table 4
Number and Percent of Participants' Classification by Group

Class	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Freshman	0	0	1	12.5	2	29
Sophomore	1	12.5	0	0	1	14
Junior	3	37.5	1	12.5	0	0
Senior	1	12.5	1	12.5	1	14
Graduate Student	3	37.5	3	37.5	1	14
Working Professional	0	0	2	25	2	129
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100

Table 5
Number and Percent of Participants' Family's Income

	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
Income Add(000)	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Less than $15	0	0	1	17	2	8	1	17	1	20	2	18	1	8	2	18	3	13
$15-$20	2	33	1	17	3	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	17	1	9	3	13
$25-$35	0	0	2	33	2	17	1	17	1	20	2	18	1	8	3	27	4	17
$35-$50	3	50	0	0	3	25	2	33	0	0	2	18	5	42	0	0	5	22
Over $50	1	17	2	33	3	25	2	33	3	60	5	46	3	25	5	45	8	35
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

participants were from lower to middle class families that earned between $15-$50,000 last year.

Table 6 shows the participants family's income by group. One-half of Group A's families earned $15-$35,000, 12.5% between $35-$50,000, and 37.5% over $50,000 last year. Twenty percent of Group B's families earned less than $15,000, 25% between $15-$35,000, 25% between $35-$50,000, and 25% over $50,000. Forty-three percent of participants' families in Group C made over $50,000, 29% between $35-$50,000, and 29% less than $35,000. This data suggests the groups were from lower to middle class families that earned between $15-$50,000 last year.

Table 7 shows participant's time spent watching television during a one week period. None of the participants indicated they spent zero hours per week watching television. Thirty-three percent of Black females watch television more than 10 hours per week, 50% between 5-10 hours per week, and 17% less than 5 hours per week. Sixty-seven percent of Black males watch television between 5-10 hours per week and 33% watch less than 5 hours per week. Overall, 17% of Blacks watch television more than 10 hours per week, 58% between 5-10 hours per week and 25% less than 5 hours per week. Sixty-seven percent of White females watch television more than 10 hours per week and 33% between 5-10 hours per week. Sixty percent of White males watch television more than 10 hours per week and 40% less than 5 hours per week. Sixty-four percent of White participants watch television more than 10 hours per week, 18% between 5-10 hours per week, and 18% less than 5 hours per week. One-half of Females watch television more than 10 hours per week, 42% between 5-10 hours per week, and 8% less than 5 hours per week. Twenty percent of Males watch television more than 10 hours per week, 27% between 5-10 hours, and 36% less than 5 hours per week. Thirty-nine percent of the entire group watch television more than 10 hours per week, 39% 5-10 hours, and 22%

Table 6
Number and Percent of Participants Family's Income by Group

Income Add(000)	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Less than $15	0	0	2	25	1	14
$15-$20	2	25	1	12.5	0	0
$25-$35	2	25	1	12.5	1	14
$35-$50	1	12.5	2	25	2	29
Over $50	3	37.5	2	25	3	43
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100

Table 7
Number and Percent of Participants' Time Spent Watching Television Per Week

	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
Hours/wk	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
10+hrs/wk	2	33	0	0	2	17	4	67	3	60	7	64	6	50	3	27	9	39
5-10hrs/wk	3	50	4	67	7	58	2	33	0	0	2	18	5	42	4	27	9	39
less than 5hrs/wk	1	17	2	33	3	25	0	0	2	40	2	18	1	8	4	36	15	22
0 hrs/wk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

less than 5 hours per week. This data suggests White participants watch more television during a one week period than Blacks and Females more than Males.

Table 8 shows participants' time spent watching television during a one week period by group. None of the participants indicated they watched zero hours of television per week. Twenty-five percent of Group A watch television less than 5 hours per week, 12.5% more than 10 hours, and 62.5%, 5-10 hours per week. Twenty-five percent of Group B watch television more than 10 hours per week, 37.5%, 5-10 hours per week, and 37% less than 5 hours per week. Eighty-six percent of Group C participants watch television more than 10 hours per week and 14%, 5-10 hours per week.

Table 9 shows the frequency distribution of participants' favorite television programs. Fifty percent of Black females chose *Living Single*, *Martin*, and *90210* as their favorite programs. Fifty percent of Black males chose *Martin*, 33% chose *Living Single* and *CNN* as their favorite programs. Fifty percent of Blacks chose *Martin*, 42% chose *Living Single*, and 25%, *90210* as their favorite television programs. Fifty percent of White females chose *Seinfeld* as their favorite program, 33% chose *Frasier* and *Sisters*. Forty percent of White males chose *Married with Children*, *Seinfeld*, and *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* as their favorite television programs. Forty-six percent of Whites chose *Seinfeld*, 18% choose *Married with Children* and *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*. Twenty-five percent of Females chose *Seinfeld*, *Living Single* and *Martin* as their favorite television program. Twenty-seven percent of Males chose *Martin*, 18% chose *Living Single* and *CNN* as their favorite television programs. Twenty-six percent of the participants chose *Martin*, 22% chose *Seinfeld* and *Living Single* as their favorite television programs. See Appendix G for a complete list of every participants' favorite television programs. This data suggests the Black participants and White participants enjoy to watch different types of television programs.

Table 10 shows the frequency distribution of participants' favorite television programs by group. *Martin* and *Living Single* were chosen by 62.5% of Group A

Table 8
Number and Percent of Participants' Time Spent Watching Television Per Week by Group

	Group A		Group B		Group C	
Hours/wk	n	%	n	%	n	%
10+hrs/wk	1	12.5	2	25	6	86
5-10hrs/wk	5	62.5	3	37.5	1	14
less than 5hrs/wk	2	25	3	37.5	0	0
0 hrs/wk	0	0	0	0	0	0
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100

Table 9
Frequency Distribution of Participants' Favorite Television Shows

Race						Sex		
Blacks			Whites					
BF	BM	Total Blacks	WF	WM	Total Whites	Females	Males	Total People
Living Single(3)	Martin(3)	Martin(6)	Seinfeld(3)	Married with Children(2)	Seinfeld(5)	Seinfeld(3)	Martin(3)	Martin(6)
Martin(3)	Living Single(2)	Living Single(5)	Frasier(2)	Seinfeld(2)	Married with Children(2)	Living Single(3)	Living Single(2)	Seinfeld(5)
90210(3)	CNN(2)	90210(3)	Sisters(2)	Fresh Prince(2)	Fresh Prince(2)	Martin(3)	CNN(2)	Living Single(5)

participants, 25% chose *90210* as their favorite television program. *Seinfeld* was chosen by 37.5% of Group B as their favorite television program, *Martin* and *Married with Children* were each chosen by 25% of Group B. Forty-three percent of Group C chose *Seinfeld* as their favorite television program, 29% chose *Sisters*. This data suggests that participants in each group enjoy watching different television programs. See Appendix G for a complete list of every participants' favorite television programs.

Table 11 shows the frequency distribution of participants' favorite male television character. Fifty percent of Black female participants chose Martin from the television program, *Martin*, 25% each chose Will Smith and Jerry Seinfeld as their favorite male television characters. Fifty percent of Black male participants chose Martin as their favorite male television character, 25% chose Charles Dutton from the television situation comedy, *Roc*, and 12.5% chose NBC news anchor, Bryant Gumble. Fifty percent of Black participants chose Martin as their favorite male television character, 17% chose Will Smith, and 17% chose Seinfeld. Fifty percent of White females chose Jerry Seinfeld as their favorite male television character, 12.5% each chose Joel Fleisman from *Northern Exposure* and Fox Maulder. Forty percent of White males each chose Kramer from the television situation comedy, *Seinfeld* and Will Smith and 12.5% chose George from *Seinfeld*. Overall, 36% of Whites chose Jerry Seinfeld, 27% chose Kramer, and 18% chose Will Smith as their favorite male television characters. Forty-two percent of Female participants chose Jerry Seinfeld, 25% Martin, and 17% chose Will Smith as their favorite male television characters. Thirty percent of the participants chose Martin, 26% chose Jerry Seinfeld, and 17% chose Will Smith as their favorite male television characters. This data suggests that the the majoirty of participants' favorite male character has a lead role on their favorite television programs. The data also suggests that Black and White participants like male characters from their favorite television programs.

Table 10
Frequency Distribution of Participants' Favorite Television Shows by Group

Group A	Group B	Group C
Martin(5)	Seinfeld(3)	Seinfeld(3)
Living Single(5)	Martin(2)	Sisters(2)
90210(2)	Married With Children(2)	

Table 11
Frequency Distribution of Participants' Favorite Male Television Characters

Race						Sex		
Blacks			Whites					
BF	BM	Total Blacks	WF	WM	Total Whites	Females	Males	Total People
Martin(3)	Martin(3)	Martin(6)	Jerry Seinfeld(3)	Kramer (Seinfeld)(2)	Jerry Seinfeld(4)	Jerry Seinfeld(5)	Martin(4)	Martin(7)
Will Smith(2)	Roc(2)	Will Smith(2)	Joel Fleisman (Northern Exposure)	Will Smith (2)	Kramer (Seinfeld)(3)	Martin(3)	Roc(2)	Seinfeld(6)
Jerry Seinfeld(2)	Bryant Gumble	Jerry Seinfeld(2)	Fox Maulder	George (Seinfeld)	Will Smith (2)	Will Smith(2)	Kramer (Seinfeld)(2)	Will Smith(4)

See Appendix H for a complete list of every participants' favorite male television characters.

Table 12 shows the frequency distribution of participants' favorite male television character by group. One-third(33%) of participants in Group A chose Martin as their favorite male television character. One-fourth (25%) of Group B each chose Martin and Will Smith in Group B, 17% chose Jerry Seinfeld. Twenty-nine percent of Group C each chose Jerry Seinfeld and Kramer as their favorite male television characters. This data suggests that the groups generally chose their favorite male character from their favorite television program. See Appendix H for a complete list of every participants' favorite male television character.

Table 13 shows participants who have Black males they consider close friends. Eighty-three percent of Black female participants have 3 or more Black males they consider close friends, 17% have two they consider close friends. Sixty-seven percent of Black male participants have three or more Black males they consider close friends, 16% have two and 16% have none. Overall, 75% of Blacks have three or more Black males they consider close friends, 17% have two, and 8% none. Eighty-three percent of White female participants have no Black males they consider close friends, 17% have two. Sixty percent of White male participants have three or more Black males they consider close friends, 20% have one, and 20% have none. Fifty-five percent of Total White participants have no Black males they consider close friends, 27% have three or more and 18% have one. Forty-two percent of Female participants have three or more Black males they consider close friends and 42% have none. Eight percent have two and 8% have one. Sixty-four percent of Male participants have Black males they consider close friends, 18% have none, 9% have two and 9% have one. Overall, 52% of the participants in the study have three or more Black males they consider close friends, 30% none, 9% two and 9% one. This data suggests that Black participants interact with Black males more than White participants.

Table 12
Frequency Distribution of Participants' Favorite Male Television Characters by Group

Group A	Group B	Group C
Martin(4)	Martin(3)	Jerry Seinfeld(2)
	Will Smith(3)	Kramer(2)
	Jerry Seinfeld(2)	

Table 13
Number and Percent of Participants Who Have Black Males as Close Friends

	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
# of Black Males	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Three or More	5	83	4	67	9	75	0	0	3	60	3	27	5	42	7	64	12	52
Two	1	17	1	16	2	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	1	9	2	9
One	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	17	1	20	2	18	1	8	1	9	2	9
None	0	0	1	16	1	8	5	83	1	20	6	55	5	42	2	18	7	30
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	12	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

Table 14 shows participants who have Black males they consider close friends by group. Five participants(62.5%) in Group A have three or more Black males they consider close friends. Twenty-five have two and 12.5% have none. Five participants(62.5%) in group B have three or more Black males they consider close friends, while 37.5% have none. Forty-two percent of Group C have no Black males they consider close friends, 29% have three or more and 29% have one. This data suggests that Groups A and B interact more with Black males than Group C.

Table 15 shows participants' perceptions that television promotes negative stereotypes of people. All Blacks, Male and Female perceive that television promotes racial stereotypes of people. Eighty-three percent of White females and 60% of White males perceive that television promotes negative stereotypes of people. Seventy-three percent of the White participants perceive that television promotes negative stereotypes, 27% said "No." Nearly all Females(92%) perceive that television promotes negative stereotypes of people and 83% of Males said "Yes." Eighty-seven percent of the participants perceive that television promotes negative stereotypes, 13% said "No."

Table 16 shows participants' perceptions that television promotes negative stereotypes of people. All Group A participants perceived that television does promote negative stereotypes of people. Seven of the eight participants(87.5%) in Group B perceive that television promotes negative stereotypes of people. In Group C, 71% perceive that television does promote negative stereotypes of people. Two participants(29%) in Group C did not perceive television as promoting negative stereotypes of people. This data suggests Black participants perceive racial stereotypes of people on television more than White participants.

Table 14
Number and Percent of Participants Who Have Black Males as Close Friends by Group

	Group A		Group B		Group C	
# of Black Males	n	%	n	%	n	%
Three or More	5	62.5	5	62.5	2	29
Two	2	25	0	0	0	0
One	0	0	0	0	2	29
None	1	12.5	3	37.5	3	42
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100

Table 15
Number and Percent of Participants' Perceptions Television Promotes Negative Stereotypes of People

	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	6	100	6	100	12	100	5	83	3	60	8	73	11	92	9	82	20	87
No	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	17	2	40	3	27	1	8	2	18	3	13
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

Table 16
Number and Percent of Participants' Perceptions That Television Promotes Negative Stereotypes of People by Group

	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	8	100	7	87.5	5	71
No	0	0	1	12.5	2	29
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100

Table 17 shows the frequency distribution of participants' perceptions that television promotes negative stereotypes of people by race. All 6 Black females perceive that television promotes Black negative stereotypes. Fifty percent perceived Whites, 83% Hispanics, 66% Native Americans, and 50% Asians as people television promotes negatively. All six Black males perceived television promotes negative Black stereotypes. Sixteen percent of Black males also perceive Whites, 83% Hispanics, 50% Native Americans, and 50% Asians as groups television promotes negatively. Overall, 100% of Blacks perceive television promotes negative stereotypes of Blacks, 33% perceive Whites, 83% perceive Hispanics, 58% perceive Hispanics, and 50% perceive Asians. Eighty-three percent of White females perceive Blacks as a group television promotes negative stereotypes, 33% perceive Whites, 33% Hispanics, 25% Native Americans, and 33% Asians as groups of people television promotes negatively. Sixty percent of White male participants each perceive Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, Native Americans and Asians as groups of people television promotes negatively. Seventy-three percent of White participants perceive Blacks , 64% perceive Whites, 64% perceive Hispanics, 55% perceive Native Americans, and 64% perceive Asians as groups of people television promotes negatively. Eleven of the twelve Female participants(92%) perceive television promotes negative Black stereotypes, 64% perceive Whites, 82% perceive Hispanics, 64% perceive Native Americans and 64% perceive Asians. Eighty-two percent of Male participants perceive Blacks , 36% perceive Whites, 73% perceive Hispanics, 55% perceive Native Americans, and 55% perceive Asians. Eighty-seven percent of the participants in the study perceive Blacks, 48% perceive Whites, 74% perceive Hispanics, 57% perceive Native Americans, and 57% Asians as groups television promotes negatively. This data suggests there are significant differences in Black and White paricipants' perceptions of television promoting racial stereotypes. The data suggests that Black participants perceive television promotes negative stereotypes of

Table 17
Frequency Distribution of Participants' Perception Television Promotes Negative Stereotypes of People by Race

	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Blacks	6	100	6	100	12	100	5	83	3	60	8	73	11	92	9	82	20	87
Whites	3	50	1	16	4	33	4	66	3	60	8	73	7	58	4	36	11	48
Hispanics	5	83	5	83	10	83	4	66	3	60	8	73	9	75	8	73	17	74
Native Americans	4	67	3	50	7	58	3	50	3	60	6	55	7	58	6	55	13	57
Asians	3	50	3	50	6	50	4	66	3	60	7	64	7	58	6	55	13	57
Other	0	0	1	16	1	8	3	50	0	0	3	27	3	25	1	9	4	17
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

themselves and other people of color more than White participants perceive television promotes negative stereotypes of Blacks and other people of color.

Table 18 shows the frequency distribution of participants' perceptions that television promotes negative stereotypes of people by group. Every one(100%) of Group A participants perceive television promotes negative stereotypes of Blacks, 50% perceive Whites, 100% perceive Hispanics, 50% perceive Native Americans, and 50% perceive Asians. In Group B, 87.5% of the participants perceive television promotes negative stereotypes of Blacks, 37.5% perceive Whites, 62.5% perceive Hispanics, 75% perceive Asians, and 12.5% perceive other groups of people. In Group C, 71% perceive television promotes negative stereotypes of Blacks, 57% perceive Whites, 57% perceive Native Americans, 43% Asians, and 43% other groups of people. This data suggests that Group A and B, the all Black group and mixed group, perceive television promotes negative stereotypes of people more so than Group C, the all White group.

Table 19 shows participants who have had Black male teachers. One-half of Black female participants have had two Black male teachers and the other 50% have had one. Fifty percent of Black male participants have had three or more Black male teachers, 17%, two, 17%, one, and 17%, have had none. One-fourth of Black participants have had three or more Black male teachers. Thirty-three percent have had two, 33%, one, and 9% have had none. Fifty percent of White female participants have had two Black male teachers, 17%, one and 33% have had none. Sixty percent of White male participants have had three or more Black male teachers and 40% have had none. White participants who have more than three Black males as teachers is 27%, two Black male teachers, 27%, one teacher, 10%, and 36% have had no Black male teachers. Fifty percent of Female participants had two Black male teachers, 33%, one, and 17% have had none. Forty-six percent of Males have had three or more Black male teachers, 9% have had two, 9% have had one, and 27% have had none. In total, 26% of the participants have had there or more Black male teachers, 30%, two, 22%, one, and 22%, none. This

Table 18
Frequency Distribution of Participants' Perception Television Promotes Negative Stereotypes of People by Race and Group

	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Blacks	8	100	7	87.5	5	71
Whites	4	50	3	37.5	4	57
Hispanics	8	100	5	62.5	4	57
Native Americans	4	50	6	75	3	43
Asians	4	50	5	62.5	3	43
Other	0	0	1	12.5	3	43
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100

Table 19
Number and Percent of Participants Who Have Had Black Males as Teachers

	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
# of Teachers	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Three or More	0	0	3	50	3	25	0	0	3	60	3	27	0	0	6	46	6	26
Two	3	50	1	17	4	33	3	50	0	0	3	27	6	50	1	9	7	30
One	3	50	1	17	4	33	1	17	0	0	1	10	4	33	1	9	5	22
None	0	0	1	16	1	9	2	33	2	40	4	36	2	17	3	27	5	22
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	6	100	11	100	23	100

data suggests Black participants have had more Black males as teachers than White participants. The data also suggests Male participants have had more Black male teachers than Female participants.

Table 20 shows participants who have had Black males as teachers by group. One-half of Group A have had one Black male teacher, 12.5% have had three or more, 25% have had two, and 12.5% have had none. Fifty percent of Group C have had three or more Black male teachers, 37.5% have had two and 12.5% have had one. Fifty-seven percent of Group C participants had not had a Black male teacher, 29% have had two, and 14% have had three or more. This data suggests Groups A and B have had more interaction with Black males than Group C.

Table 21 shows how often participants watch the television situation comedies, *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and *Martin*. None of the participants 'Always' watched *The Fresh Prince*. Sixty-seven percent of Black female participants watch almost always and 33%, sometimes. Eighty-three percent of Black male participants watch *The Fresh Prince* sometimes. Overall, 42% of Black participants almost always watch *The Fresh Prince* and 58% watch sometimes. Sixty-seven percent of White female participants watch *The Fresh Prince* sometimes and 33% never watch the program. Sixty percent of White male participants almost always watch *The Fresh Prince*, 20%, sometimes, and 20% never watch the program. As a group, 27% of White participants almost always watch *The Fresh Prince,* 46% watch sometimes, and 27% never watch the program. One-half of Female participants watch *The Fresh Prince* sometimes, 33% almost always watch and 17% never watch. Thirty-six percent of Male participants almost always watch *The Fresh Prince*, 55% watch sometimes, and 9% never watch the program. Thirty-five percent of the participants almost always watch *The Fresh Prince*, 52% watch sometimes, and 13% never watch.

Fifty percent of Black female participants always watch *Martin* and 50% almost always watch *Martin*. Seventeen percent of Black male participants always watch

Table 20
Number and Percent of Participants Who Have Had Black Males as Teachers by Group

	Group A		Group B		Group C	
# of Teachers	n	%	n	%	n	%
Three or More	1	12.5	4	50	1	14
Two	2	25	3	37.5	2	29
One	4	50	1	12.5	0	0
None	1	12.5	0	0	4	57
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100

Table 21
Number and Percent of Participants That Watch Television Situation Comedies

	The Fresh Prince of Bel Air																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Always	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Almost Always	4	67	1	17	5	42	0	0	3	60	3	27	4	33	4	36	8	35
Sometimes	2	33	5	83	7	58	4	67	1	20	5	46	6	50	6	55	12	52
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	33	1	20	3	27	2	17	1	9	3	13
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

	Martin																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Always	3	50	1	17	4	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	25	1	9	4	17
Almost Always	3	50	2	33	5	42	0	0	3	60	3	27	3	25	5	46	8	25
Sometimes	0	0	3	50	3	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	27	3	13
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	100	2	40	8	73	6	50	2	18	8	35
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

Martin, 33% almost always watch, and 50% watch sometimes. Overall, 33% of Black participants always watch *Martin*, 42% almost always watch, and 25% watch sometimes. All six(100%) of White female participants and 40% of White male participants never watch *Martin*. Sixty percent of White male participants almost always watch *Martin*. Seventy-three percent of White participants never watch *Martin* and 27% almost always watch *Martin*. Twenty-five percent of Female participants always watch *Martin*, 25% almost always watch, and 50% never watch. Nineteen percent of Male participants always watch *Martin*, 46% almost always watch *Martin*, 27% watch *Martin* sometimes, and 18% never watch. Seventeen percent of the participants always watch *Martin*, 25% almost always watch *Martin*, 13% watch sometimes and 35% never watch. This data suggests Black participants have watched *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and *Martin* considerable more than White participants.

Table 22 shows how often participants by group watch the television programs, *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and *Martin*. Five(62.5%) Group A participants watch *The Fresh Prince* sometimes and 37.5% almost always watch the program. In Group B, 50% watch *The Fresh Prince* sometimes, 37.5% almost always watch, and 12.5% never watch the program. Twenty-nine percent of Group C participants always watch *The Fresh Prince*, 29% never watch, and 42% watch sometimes. Fifty percent of Group A almost always watch *Martin*, 25% always watch and 25% watch sometimes. Twenty-five percent of Group B always watch *Martin*, 25% almost always watch, 12.5% watch sometimes, and 37.5% never watch . In Group C, 71% never watch *Martin* and 29% almost always watch. This data suggests Groups A and B have watched *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* more often than Group C.

Table 23 shows the participants' average rating of their perception of Will and Martin as positive or negative characters. Black females participants' average rating of Will is 3.83 and 2.67 for Martin. Black male participants' average rating of Will is 3.67 and 3.17 for Martin. Black participants' average rating of Will is 3.67 and 3.17 for

Table 22
Number and Percent of Participants That Watch Television Situation Comedies by Group

	The Fresh Prince of Bel Air					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Always	0	0	0	0	2	29
Almost Always	3	37.5	3	37.5	0	0
Sometimes	5	62.5	4	50	3	42
Never	0		1	12.5	2	29
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100
	Martin					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Always	2	25	2	25	0	0
Almost Always	4	50	2	25	2	29
Sometimes	2	25	1	12.5	0	0
Never	0	0	3	37.5	5	71
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100

Table 23
Number and Average Rating of Participants' Perception of Television Characters

	Rating Characters on the Following Scale: 1--2--3--4--5 Negative Positive																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
Avg. Rating	n	r	n	r	n	r	n	r	n	r	n	r	n	r	n	r	n	r
Will	6	3.83	6	3.5	12	3.67	4	3.75	4	3.75	8	3.75	10	3.8	10	3.6	20	3.7
Martin	6	2.67	6	3.67	12	3.17	2	2	3	3.33	5	2.8	8	2.5	9	3.56	17	3.06

Martin. White females average rating of Will is 3.75 and 2 for Martin. White male participants' average rating of Will is 3.75 and 3.33 for Martin. White participants' average rating for the Fresh prince is 3.75 and 2.8 for Martin. Female participants' average rating of Will is 3.8 and 2.5 for Martin. Male participants' average rating of Will is 3.6 and 3.56 for Martin. Will's average rating for all participants is 3.7 and 3.06 for Martin. This data suggests Will is perceived as more positive by the participants and Martin is perceived as less positive.

Table 24 shows participants average rating of their perception of Will and Martin as positive or negative characters. Group A's average rating of Will is 3.75 and 3 for Martin. Group B's average rating of Will is 3.28 and 3.4 for Martin. Group C's average rating of Will is 4.2 and 2.75 for Martin. This data suggest each group perceived Will as more positive and Martin as less positive.

Discussion

The Perception Assessment Survey was designed to assess the participants' demographic background, their time spent viewing television and the television programs in the study, social interaction with Black males, perception of racial stereotypes on television, perception of television programs and male characters, perception of Will's character from *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and Martin's character from *Martin.*

Demographics and Background

The data collected in this section(Tables 1-6)indicates the majority of all participants Black and White, Female and Male, and in each group were between the ages of 18-24. This data suggests that even though the participants' ages ranged from 18 through 45, the groups were composed primarily of young people. The data also suggests that the participants were composed of a variety of classifications from Freshman to

Table 24
Number and Average Rating of Participants' Perception of Television Characters by Group

	Rating Characters on the Following Scale: 1--2--3--4--5 Negative Positive						
	Group A		Group B		Group C		
Avg. Rating	n	r	n	r	n	r	n
Will	8	3.75	7	3.28	5	4.2	20
Martin	8	3	5	3.4	4	2.75	17

Working Professional. The data suggests Black participants appeared to come from families with a variety of incomes and the majority of White participants' families earned over $50,000 last year. Overall, the research suggests that the participants were mainly between 18-24, from a variety of classifications and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Frequency Viewing Television and The Fresh Prince of Bel Air and Martin

The data collected on Tables 7, 8 and 21,22 suggests the participants do watch television and frequently watch the two television programs in the study. The information may more specifically suggests that White female and White male participants watch more hours of television during a one week period than Black female and Black male participants. In addition, the data suggests Female participants may have watched more television than Male participants. Further, the data suggests Group C has watched more television during a one week period than Groups A and B. Overall, the data suggests the participants in the study watch a large amount of television during a one week period. The information from Table 21 and 22 suggests that Black participants watch *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* more than White participants. In addition, the data suggests that White male participants watch these programs more than White female participants. The data from Table 22 suggests that Groups A and B watch these programs quite frequently, however, it suggests that Group C has hardly seen these two programs.

Social Interaction with Black Males

The data on Tables 13 and 19 provide some assessment of how the participants interacted with Black males. This data suggests that Black and White male participants had interacted with a number of Black males as friends or maybe in the classroom as a

teacher. Overall, the data suggests Black participants, White male participants, and Male participants in general, have had more interaction with Black males on these two levels than White participants and White female participants. In the same way, the data suggest Groups A and B have had more interaction with Black males on these levels than Group C.

Perception of Racial Stereotypes on Television

The data from this research in Table 15 suggests that Black participants perceive racial stereotypes on television more than White participants. On Table 17 the number of Black participants indicating that these groups of people were stereotyped far exceeds the number of White participants indicating they perceive these groups of people as being stereotyped. This data may suggest that the Black participants perceive themselves and other people of color as being stereotyped by television more so than the White participants in the study.

Perception of Television Shows and Male Characters

Tables 9 and 10 show the most frequently chosen favorite television show and favorite male television character. The data may suggest that Black and White participants in this study like two different kinds of television programs. Black participants chose *Martin* and *Living Single* as their favorite television programs and chose Will Smith from *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and Martin from *Martin* as their top male character. White participants chose *Seinfeld* as their favorite program and male characters from *Seinfeld* including Jerry Seinfeld as their favorite male characters. Tables 10 and 12 echo the data in Table 9. Group A cited *Martin* as their favorite television program and favorite male character. Group C chose *Seinfeld* for favorite

television program, and Group B was divided between *Martin* and *Seinfeld.* This information may suggest that the Black and White participants chose the television programs and male characters they like to watch the most as their favorites.

Perception of Will and Martin as Positive or Negative

The data on Tables 23 and 24 may suggest that the majority of the participants perceive Will as being more positive compared to Martin. This data is an average of the numbers of people who rated these characters. Will's character tends to rate more positive than Martin's character. This data would suggest that Black females and White females especially perceive Will as more positive than Martin. The most significant difference in the Groups' average rating for Will and Martin was in Group C. The data would suggest that Group C perceive Will as more positive than Martin.

Summary

The data collected from this Perception Assessment Survey may suggest that the perceptions of racial stereotypes and television characters were in many ways different depending on the participants' race, gender , race and gender, and focus group. The groups appeared to be well-balanced with a people from a variety of income backgrounds, classifications, and age groups. The data from this survey instrument suggests that the participants' perception of television and television characters may depend upon their race, gender, and social interaction with people from a variety of races.

Section Two
Pre-Test Questionnaire Before Viewing the Two Television Programs

Table 25 shows approximately how many episodes of *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* the participants have watched. Eighty-three percent of Black female participants have watched ten or more episodes of *The Fresh Prince* and 17% have watched three to ten episodes. Fifty percent of Black male participants have watched ten or more episodes of *The Fresh Prince* and 50% three to ten episodes. Sixty-seven percent of Black participants have watched ten or more episodes of *The Fresh Prince* and 33% have watch three to ten episodes. Sixty-seven percent of White female participants have watched three to ten episode of *The Fresh Prince*, 33% have watch zero episodes. Sixty percent of White male participants have watched ten or more episodes of *The Fresh Prince*, 20%, three to ten, and 20%, zero episodes. Forty-two percent of White participants have watched ten or more episodes of *The Fresh Prince*, 46% three to ten episodes and 27%, zero episodes. Forty-two percent of Female participants have watched ten or more episodes and 42% have watched three to ten episodes, while 16% have watched zero. Fifty-five percent of Male participants have watched ten or more episodes, 36%, three to ten episodes and 9%, zero episodes. Forty-eight percent of the participants have watched ten or more episodes, 39%, three to ten, and 13%, zero episodes.

Eighty-three percent of Black female and Black male participants both have watched ten or more episodes of *Martin* and 17%, three to ten episodes. Eighty-three percent of Black participants have watched ten or more episodes of *Martin* and 17% have watched three to ten episodes. Sixty-six percent of White female participants have watched zero episodes of *Martin* and 16% have watched one and two episodes. Sixty percent of White male participants have watched ten or more episodes of *Martin*, 20%, three to ten and 20%, zero episodes. Twenty-seven percent of White participants have watched ten or more episodes of *Martin*, 9% have watched three to ten, 9% have watched

Table 25
Number and Percent of Frequency Participants
Watch Television Situation Comedies

	The Fresh Prince of Bel Air																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
# of Episodes	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Ten or More	5	83	3	50	8	67	0	0	3	60	3	27	5	42	6	55	11	48
Three to Ten	1	17	3	50	4	33	4	67	1	20	5	46	5	42	4	36	9	39
Two	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
One	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Zero	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	33	1	20	3	27	2	16	1	9	3	13
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

	Martin																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
# of Episodes	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Ten or More	5	83	5	83	10	83	0	0	3	60	3	27	5	42	8	73	13	57
Three to Ten	1	17	1	17	2	17	0	0	1	20	1	9	1	8	2	18	3	13
Two	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16	0	0	1	9	1	8	0	0	1	4
One	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16	0	0	1	9	1	9	0	0	1	4
Zero	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	66	1	20	5	46	4	33	1	9	5	22
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

two, 9% have watched one, and 46% have watched zero episodes. Forty-two percent of Female participants have watched ten or more episodes, 8%, three to ten, 8%, two episodes, 9%, one episode, and 33%, zero episodes. Seventy-three percent of Male participants have watched ten or more episodes, 18%, three to ten and 9%, zero episodes. Overall, 57% of the participants have watched ten or more episodes, 13%, three to ten episodes, 4%, two, 4%, one, and 22%, zero episodes. This data suggests Black participants have seen more episodes of both programs than White participants, and Male participants have seen more episodes than Female participants.

Table 26 shows the frequency participants watch *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and *Martin* by group. Seven of the participants in Group A indicated they have watched ten or more episodes of *The Fresh Prince*, one (12.5%) has watched three to ten episodes. Twenty-five percent of participants in Group B have watched ten or more episodes, 62.5%, three to ten episodes and 12.5% have watched no episodes of *The Fresh Prince*. Twenty-nine percent of Group C participants have watched ten or more episodes, 42% have watched three to ten episodes and 29% have never watched *The Fresh Prince*. All of Group A participants have watched ten or more episodes of *Martin*. Twenty-five percent of Group B participants have watched three to ten episodes, 37.5% have watched ten or more episodes and 37.5% have watched *Martin*. Forty-two percent of Group C participants indicated they have watched zero episodes of *Martin*, 14% have watched ten or more episodes, three to ten episodes, two episodes, and one episode respectively. This data suggests that Groups A and B have watched both of these programs more times than Group C.

Table 27 shows participants' perception of Will and Martin's characters are positive reflections of Black men before viewing the focus group television programs. One-third(33%) of Black female participants disagreed that Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 35% agreed or strongly agreed, and 33% had no opinion. Thirty-three percent of Black male participants agreed that Will's character is a positive

Table 26
Number and Percent of Frequency Participants
Watch Television Situation Comedies by Group

	The Fresh Prince of Bel Air					
	Group A		**Group B**		**Group C**	
# of Episodes	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Ten or More	7	87.5	2	25	2	29
Three to Ten	1	12.5	5	62.5	3	42
Two	0	0	0	0	0	0
One	0	0	0	0	0	0
Zero	0	0	1	0	2	29
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100
	Martin					
	Group A		**Group B**		**Group C**	
# of Episodes	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Ten or more	8	100	3	37.5	1	14
Three to ten	0	0	2	25	1	14
Two	0	0	0	0	1	14
One	0	0	0	0	1	14
Zero	0	0	3	37.5	3	42
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100

Table 27
Number and Percent of Participants' Perception Television Characters Are Positive Reflections of Black Men Before Viewing Focus Group Television Programs

Question	I believe Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men.																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	1	17	0	0	1	8	0	0	1	25	1	12	1	10	1	10	2	10
Agree	1	17	2	33	3	25	1	25	2	50	3	38	2	20	4	40	6	30
No Opinion	2	33	3	50	5	42	2	50	0	0	2	25	4	40	3	30	7	35
Disagree	2	33	1	17	3	25	1	25	1	25	2	25	3	30	2	20	5	25
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
n=20	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	20	100

Question	I believe Martin's character is a positive reflection of Black men.																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	1	17	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	1	6
Agree	2	33	2	33	4	33	0	0	3	100	3	60	2	25	5	56	7	41
No Opinion	2	33	0	0	2	17	1	50	0	0	1	20	3	38	0	0	3	17
Disagree	1	17	3	50	4	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	12	3	33	4	24
Strongly Disagree	1	17	0	0	1	8	1	50	0	0	1	20	2	25	0	0	2	12
n=17	6	100	6	100	12	100	2	100	3	100	5	100	8	100	9	100	17	100

reflection of Black men, 17% disagreed, and 50% had no opinion. Thirty-three percent of Black participants agreed or strongly agreed that Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 25% disagreed, and 42% had no opinion. Twenty-five percent of White female participants agreed that Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 25% disagreed and 50% had no opinion. Seventy-five percent of White male participants agreed or strongly agreed that Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men and 25% disagreed. Fifty percent of White participants agreed or strongly agreed that Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 25% disagreed, and 25% had no opinion. Thirty percent of Female participants agreed or strongly agreed that Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 30% disagreed, and 40% had no opinion. Fifty percent of Male participants agreed or strongly agreed Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 20% disagreed and 30% had no opinion. Overall, 40% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 25% disagreed, and 35% had no opinion.

Thirty-three percent of Black female participants agreed that Martin's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 34% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 33% had no opinion. Fifty percent of Black male participants disagreed that Martin is a positive reflection of Black men, 33% agreed and 17% strongly agreed. Thirty-three percent of Black participants agreed that Martin's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 9% strongly agreed, 33% disagreed, and 17% had no opinion. Fifty percent of White female participants strongly disagreed that Martin's character is a positive reflection of Black men and 50% had no opinion. All of the White male participants(100%) agreed that Martin's character is a positive reflection of Black men. Sixty percent of White participants agreed that Martin's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 20% strongly disagreed, and 20% had no opinion. Twenty-five percent of Female participants agreed that Martin's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 25% strongly disagreed, 12% disagreed and 38% had no opinion. Overall, 41% of the participants

agreed or strongly agreed that Martin's character is a positive refection of Black men, 24% disagreed, 12% strongly disagreed, and 17% had no opinion. This data suggests Black and White participants are divided amongst themselves as to whether they perceive Will's character as a positive reflection of Black men. The data also may suggest Black male participants perceive Martin more as a negative reflection of Black men than White male participants. In addition, the data may suggest Male participants perceive Will and Martin's characters as positive reflections of Black men more than the Female participants.

Table 28 shows participants' perception of Will and Martin's characters are positive reflections of Black men by group. Twenty-five percent of Group A agreed or strongly agreed that Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 37.5% disagreed, and 37.5% had no opinion. Forty-three percent of Group B agreed that Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 15% disagreed, and 43% had no opinion. Sixty percent of Group C participants agreed that Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 20% disagreed, and 20% had no opinion. Twenty-five percent of Group A participants disagreed that Martin's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 12.5% strongly disagreed, 37.5% agreed, and 25% had no opinion. Sixty percent of Group B agreed or strongly agreed that Martin's character is positive reflection of Black men and 40% disagreed. Fifty percent of Group C agreed that Martin's character is a positive reflection of Black men, 25% strongly disagreed and 25% had no opinion. This data suggests that each group perceived Will's character as more of a positive reflection of Black men than Martin's character.

Table 29 shows participants' who watch *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* because they like Will and Martin's characters. Eighty-three percent of Black female participants agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they like Will's character, 17% disagreed. Fifty-six percent of Black male participants agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they like Will's character, 17% disagreed and 17% strongly disagreed. Sixty-seven

Table 28
Number and Percent of Participants' Perception Television Characters Are Positive Reflections of Black Men Before Viewing Focus Group Television Programs by Group

Question	I believe Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men.					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	1	12.5	0	0	1	20
Agree	1	12.5	3	43	2	40
No Opinion	3	37.5	3	43	1	20
Disagree	3	37.5	1	14	1	20
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
n=20	8	100	7	100	5	100
Question	I believe Martin's character is a positive reflection of Black men.					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	1	20	0	0
Agree	3	37.5	2	40	2	50
No Opinion	2	25	0	0	1	25
Disagree	2	25	2	40	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	12.5	0		1	25
n=17	8	100	5	100	4	100

Table 29
Number and Percent of Participants' Perception Television Characters Are Likable Before Viewing Focus Group Television Programs

Question	I watch *The Fresh Prince* because I like Will's character.																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	1	16	1	8	0	0	1	25	1	12	0	0	2	20	2	10
Agree	5	83	3	50	8	67	3	75	2	50	5	63	8	80	5	50	13	65
No Opinion	0	0	0	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	1	17	1	17	2	17	1	25	1	25	2	25	2	20	2	20	4	20
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	17	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	1	5
n=20	6	100	6	100	12	100	4	100	4	100	8	100	10	100	8	100	20	100

Question	I watch *Martin* because I like Will's character.																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	1	17	2	33	3	25	0	0	3	100	3	60	1	12	5	56	6	34
Agree	3	30	1	17	4	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	38	1	11	4	24
No Opinion	2	33	0	0	2	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	25	0	0	2	12
Disagree	0	0	2	33	2	17	2	100	0	0	2	40	2	25	2	22	4	24
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	17	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	1	6
n=17	6	100	6	100	12	100	2	100	3	100	5	100	8	100	9	100	17	100

percent of Black participants agreed they watched *The Fresh Prince* because they like Will's character, 17% disagreed, and 8% strongly disagreed. Seventy-five percent of White female participants watched *The Fresh Prince* because they like Will's character, 25% disagreed. Seventy-five percent of White male participants agreed or strongly agreed they watched *The Fresh Prince* because they like Will's character, 25% disagreed. Sixty percent of White participants agreed they watched *The Fresh Prince* because they like Will's character, 12% strongly agreed, and 25% disagreed. Eighty percent of Female participants agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they like Will's character, 20% disagreed. Seventy percent of Male participants agreed or strongly agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they like Will's character, 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Overall, sixty-five percent of the participants agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they like Will's character, 10% strongly agreed, 20% disagreed, and 5% strongly disagreed.

Thirty percent of Black female participants agreed they watched *Martin* because they like Martin's character, 17% strongly agreed, and 33% had no opinion. Thirty-three percent of Black male participants strongly agreed they watched *Martin* because they like Martin's character, 17% agreed, 33% disagreed, and 17% strongly disagreed. Thirty-three percent of Black participants agreed they watched *Martin* because they like Martin's character, 25% strongly agreed, 17% disagreed, and 17% had no opinion. All of the White female participants(100%) disagreed they watch *Martin* because they like Martin's character. All the White male participants strongly agreed they watched *Martin* because they like Martin's character. Sixty percent of White participants strongly agreed they watched *Martin* because they like Martin's character and 40% disagreed. Thirty-eight percent of Female participants agreed they watch Martin because they like Martin's character, 12% strongly agreed, 25% disagreed, and 25% had no opinion. Sixty-seven percent of Male participants agreed or strongly agreed they watched Martin because they like Martin's character, 22% disagreed, 11% strongly disagreed. Overall 34% of the

participants strongly agreed they watched Martin because they like Martin's character, 24% agreed, 24% disagreed, 6% strongly disagreed, and 12% had no opinion. This data suggests the majority of the focus group participants watched *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* because they like Will and Martin's characters. In addition, the data suggests that White female participants did not like Martin's character.

Table 30 shows participants who watch *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* because they like Will and Martin's characters. Seventy-five percent of Group A agreed or strongly agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they like Will's character, 25% disagreed. Seventy-two percent of Group B agreed or strongly agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they like Will's character, 14% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed. Eighty percent of Group C agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they like Will's character, 20% disagreed. Seventy-five percent of Group A agreed or strongly agreed they watch *Martin* because they like Martin's character, 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Forty percent of Group B strongly agreed they watch *Martin* because they like Martin's character, 20% disagreed, 40% had no opinion. Fifty percent of Group C strongly agreed they watch *Martin* because they like Martin's character and 50% disagreed. This data suggests that the majority of participants in each group generally watch *The Fresh Prince* because they like Will's character, however, each group was more divided on whether they like Martin's character.

Table 31 shows participants who watch *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* because they can relate to the plots of the stories. Sixty-seven percent of Black female participants agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 33% disagreed. Thirty-three percent of Black male participants agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 50% disagreed and 17% strongly disagreed. Fifty percent of Black participants agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 42% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed. Twenty-five percent of White female participants agreed they watch

Table 30
Number and Percent of Participants' Perception Television Characters Are Likable Before Viewing Focus Group Television Programs by Group

Question	I watch *The Fresh Prince* because I like Will's character.					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	1	12.5	1	14	0	0
Agree	5	62.5	4	50	4	80
No Opinion	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	2	25	1	14	1	20
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	4	0	0
n=20	8	100	7	100	5	100
Question	I watch the *Martin* because I like Martin's character.					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	2	25	2	40	2	50
Agree	4	50	0	0	0	0
No Opinion	0	0	2	40	0	
Disagree	1	12.5	1	20	2	0
Strongly Disagree	1	12.5	0	0	0	50
n=17	8	100	5	100	4	100

Table 31
Number and Percent of Participants' Perception They Can Relate to the Plots of the Stories of Television Situation Comedies Before Viewing Focus Group Television Programs

Question	I watch *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* because I can relate to the plots of the stories.																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	4	67	2	33	6	50	1	25	1	25	2	25	5	50	3	30	8	40
No Opinion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	50	2	25	0	0	2	20	2	10
Disagree	2	33	3	50	4	42	3	75	1	25	4	50	5	50	4	40	9	45
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	17	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	1	5
n=20	6	100	6	100	11	100	4	100	4	100	8	100	10	100	10	100	20	100

Question	I watch *Martin* because I can relate to the plots of the stories.																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	5	83	1	16	6	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	62	1	11	6	35
No Opinion	0	0	1	17	1	9	0	0	3	100	3	60	0	0	4	45	4	24
Disagree	1	17	3	50	4	33	2	100	0	0	2	40	3	38	3	33	6	35
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	17	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	1	6
n=17	6	100	6	100	12	100	2	100	3	100	5	100	8	100	9	100	17	100

The Fresh Prince because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 75% disagreed. Twenty-five percent of White male participants agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 25% disagreed, and 50% had no opinion. Twenty-five percent of White participants agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 50% disagreed, and 25% had no opinion. Fifty percent of Female participants agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they can relate to the plots of the stories and 50% disagreed. Thirty percent of Male participants agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 40% disagreed, agreed, and 20% had no opinion. Overall, 40% of the participants agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 50% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 10% had no opinion.

Eighty-three percent of Black female participants agree they watch *Martin* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 17% disagreed. Fifty percent of Black male participants disagreed they watch *Martin* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 17% strongly disagreed, 16% agreed, and 17% had no opinion. Fifty percent of Black male participants agreed they watch *Martin* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 33% disagreed and 9% had no opinion. All the White female participants(100%) strongly disagreed they watch *Martin* because they can relate to the plots of the stories. All the White male participants had no opinion. Therefore, 40% of White participants disagreed they watch *Martin* because they can relate to the plots of the stories and 60% had no opinion. Sixty-two percent of Female participants agreed they watch *Martin* because they can relate to the plots of the stories and 38% disagreed. Thirty-three percent of Male participants disagreed they watch *Martin* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 11% strongly disagreed, 11% agreed, and 45% had no opinion. Thirty-five percent of the total participants agreed they watch *Martin* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 41% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 24% had no opinion. This data suggests Black female participants can relate to *The Fresh*

Prince and *Martin* more than the White female participants. In addition, the data suggests Black participants can relate to these programs better than White participants.

Table 32 shows participants who watch *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* because they can relate to the plots of the stories by group. Fifty percent of Group A agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 50% disagreed. Fifty-four percent of Group B disagreed or strongly disagreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 29% agreed, and 14% had no opinion. Forty percent of Group C agreed they watch *The Fresh Prince* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 40% disagreed and 20% had no opinion. Fifty percent of Group A agreed they watch *Martin* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 37.5% disagreed and 12.5% had no opinion. Forty percent of Group B agreed they watch *Martin* because they can relate to the plots of the stories, 20% disagreed, 20% strongly disagreed and 20% had no opinion. Fifty percent of Group C disagreed they watch *Martin* because they can relate to the plots of the stories and 50% had no opinion.

Discussion

The Pre-Test questionnaire was designed to assess the participants' familiarity with the programs and their perception of the programs including their perception of Black male lead characters. The data in Table 25 and 26 suggest the majority of the participants were familiar with both programs. Most of the participants had seen at least one episode of the programs. However, there were a few White participants that indicated they had never seen *The Fresh Prince* or *Martin*. Nearly all of the White female and White male participants had seen at least three episodes of *The Fresh Prince*. However, the data indicated quite the opposite for *Martin*. This data suggests that the majority of White participants were not very familiar with the character of Martin or Will Smith because they had never seen the programs.

Table 32
Number and Percent of Participants' Perception They Can Relate to the Plots of the Stories of Television Situation Comedies Before Viewing Focus Group Television Programs by Group

Question	I watch *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* because I can relate to the plots of the stories.					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	4	50	2	29	2	40
No Opinion	0	0	1	14	1	20
Disagree	4	50	3	43	0	40
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	14	2	0
n=20	8	100	7	100	5	100
Question	I watch *Martin* because I can relate to the plots of the stories.					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	4	50	2	40	0	0
No Opinion	1	12.5	1	20	2	50
Disagree	3	37.5	1	20	2	50
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	20	0	0
n=17	8	100	5	100	4	100

The data on Tables 27 and 28 would suggest that Black participants were divided on whether they perceived Will and Martin as a positive reflection of Black Men. The data suggests White participants perceive Will and Martin as a positive reflection of Black Men. In Table 29 and 30, the data suggests that the majority of the participants Black, White, Male and Female watch these two programs because they like Will and Martin's characters. Most of the Black participants, according to Tables 31 and 32, indicated they watched the programs because they could relate to the plots.

Summary

The data in this section suggests that Black participants were more familiar with *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin.* They had seen both programs a number of times and also indicated the programs were their favorite programs and Will and Martin were two of their favorite male characters. The majority of the White participants had never seen these programs and did not choose them frequently as their favorite programs and or choose their leading male character as their favorite. Therefore, this data may suggest that the White participants may have a limited perception of Will and Martin because they have not spent much time watching them on the television.

Section Three
Post-Test Questionnnaire After Viewing the Two Television Programs

Table 33 shows participants' perception Will and Martin's characters are positive reflection of Black men after they viewed the focus group television programs. Thirty-three percent of Black female participants agreed they perceive Will's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 34% disagreed, and 33% had no opinion. Fifty percent of Black male participants agreed they perceive Will's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 17% disagreed and 33% had no opinion. Forty-two percent of Black participants agreed they perceive Will's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 25% disagreed and 33% had no opinion. Thirty-three percent of White female participants agreed they perceive Will's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 50% disagreed and 33% had no opinion. Eighty percent of White male participants agreed or strongly agreed they perceive Will's character as a positive reflection of Black men and 20% had no opinion. Fifty-five percent of White participants agreed or strongly agreed they perceive Will's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 27% disagreed and 18% had no opinion. Thirty-three percent of Female participants agreed they perceive Will's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 42% disagreed and 25% had no opinion. Sixty-four percent of Male participants agreed they perceive Will's character as beging a positive reflection of Black men, 9% disagreed and 27% had no opinion. Overall, 48% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed they perceive Will's character as being a positive reflection of Black men, 26% disagreed and 26% had no opinion.

Thirty-three percent of Black female participants perceived Martin's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 34% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 33% had no opinion. Sixty-six percent of Black male participants disagreed they perceive Martin's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 17% agreed and 17% had no opinion.

Table 33
Number and Percent of Participants' Perception Television Characters Are Positive Reflections of Black Men After Viewing Focus Group Television Programs

Question	I believe Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men.																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	20	1	9	0	0	1	9	1	4
Agree	2	33	3	50	5	42	2	33	3	60	5	46	4	33	6	55	10	44
No Opinion	2	33	2	33	4	33	1	17	1	20	2	18	3	25	3	27	6	26
Disagree	2	34	1	17	3	25	3	50	0	0	3	27	5	42	1	9	6	26
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

Question	I believe Martin's character is a positive reflection of Black men.																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	2	33	1	17	3	25	0	0	3	60	3	27	2	17	4	36	6	26
No Opinion	2	33	1	17	3	25	1	17	0	0	1	9	3	25	1	9	4	17
Disagree	1	17	4	66	5	42	5	83	1	20	6	55	6	50	5	46	11	48
Strongly Disagree	1	17	0	0	1	8	0	0	1	20	1	9	1	8	1	9	2	9
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

Fifty percent of Black participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive Martin as a positive reflection of Black men, 25% agreed and 25% had no opinion. Eighty-three percent of White female participants disagreed they perceive Martin's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 17% had no opinion. Sixty percent of White male participants agreed they perceived Martin's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 20% disagreed and 20% had no opinion. Sixty-four percent of White participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive Martin's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 27% agreed and 9% had no opinion. Fifty-eight percent of Female participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive Martin's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 17% agreed and 25% had no opinion. Fifty-four percent of Male participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive Martin's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 39% had no opinion. Overall, 57% of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive Martin's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 26% agreed and 17% had no opinion. This data suggests Black female participants perceive Will and Martin's characters as more positive than White female participants. The data also suggests, White male participants perceived Will and Martin's characters as more positive than Black male participants. In addition, the data suggests White and Black participants perceive Will's character as more positive than Martin's character.

Table 34 shows by group participants' perception Will and Martin's characters are positive reflections of Black men after viewing the two television programs. Fifty percent of Group A agreed they perceive Will's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 25% disagreed and 25% had no opinion. In Group B, 37.5% agreed they perceive Will's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 12.5% disagreed and 50% had no opinion. Fifty-six percent of Group C participants agreed or strongly agreed they perceive Will's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 42% disagreed. Also in Group A, 67.5% of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive Martin's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 37% agreed. Twenty-five percent of

Table 34
Number and Percent of Participants' Perception Television Characters Are Positive Reflections of Black Men After Viewing Focus Group Television Programs by Group

Question	I believe Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men.					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	1	14
Agree	4	50	3	37.5	3	42
No Opinion	2	25	4	50	0	0
Disagree	2	25	1	12.5	3	42
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	14	0	0
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100
Question	I believe Martin's character is a positive reflection of Black men.					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	3	37.5	1	25	3	42
No Opinion	0	0	3	37.5	2	29
Disagree	4	50	3	37.5	2	29
Strongly Disagree	1	12.5	1	0	0	0
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100

Group B agreed they perceive Martin's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 37% disagreed and 37.5% had no opinion. Forty-two percent of Group C participants agreed they perceive Martin's character as a positive reflection of Black men, 29% disagreed and 29% had no opinion. This data suggests Group A perceive Will's character as more positive and Martin's character as more negative. This data also suggests Group C participants perceive Will and Martin's characters as positive.

Table 35 shows participants who perceive that television situation comedies, *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and *Martin* promote positive images of Black men. Sixty-seven percent of Black female participants agreed they perceive *The Fresh Prince* promotes positive images of Black men, 33% disagreed. Sixty-six percent of Black male participants agreed they perceive *The Fresh Prince* promote positive images of Black men, 17% disagreed, and 17% had no opinion. Sixty-seven percent of Black participants agreed they perceive *The Fresh Prince* promotes positive images of Black men, 25% disagreed and 8% had no opinion. Sixty-seven percent of White female participants agreed they perceive *The Fresh Prince* promote positive images of Black men and 33% disagreed. Forty percent of White male participants agreed they perceive *The Fresh Prince* promotes positive images of Black men, 20% disagreed and 40% had no opinion. Fifty-five percent of White participants agreed they perceive *The Fresh Prince* promotes positive images of Black men, 27% disagreed and 18% had no opinion. Sixty percent of Female participants agreed they perceive *The Fresh Prince* promotes positive images of Black men and 33% disagreed. Fifty-five percent agreed they perceive *The Fresh Prince* promotes positive images of Black men, 18% disagreed and 27% had no opinion. Overall, Sixty-one percent of the participants agreed they perceive *The Fresh Prince* promotes positive images of Black men, 6% disagreed and 13% had no opinion.

Thirty-three percent of Black female participants agreed they perceive *Martin* promotes positive images of Black men, 33% disagreed and 34% had no opinion. Fifty percent of Black male participants disagreed they perceive *Martin* promotes positive

Table 35
Number and Percent of Participants' Perception Television Characters Promote Positive Images of Black Men After Viewing Focus Group Television Programs

Question	I believe *The Fresh Prince* promotes positive images of Black men.																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	4	67	4	66	8	67	4	67	2	40	6	55	8	67	6	55	14	61
No Opinion	0	0	1	17	1	8	0	0	2	40	2	18	0	0	3	27	3	13
Disagree	2	33	1	17	3	25	2	33	1	20	3	27	4	33	2	18	6	26
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

Question	I believe *Martin* promotes positive images of Black men.																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	2	33	2	33	4	33	0	0	4	80	4	36	2	17	6	55	8	35
No Opinion	2	33	1	17	3	25	2	33	0	0	2	18	4	33	1	9	5	22
Disagree	2	34	3	50	5	42	4	67	1	20	5	46	6	50	4	36	10	43
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

images of Black men, 33% agreed and 17% had no opinion. Forty-two percent of Black participants disagreed they perceive *Martin* promotes positive images of Black men, 33% agreed and 25% had no opinion. Sixty-seven percent of White female participants disagreed they perceive *Martin* promotes positive images of Black men, 33% had no opinion. Eighty percent of White male participants agreed they perceive *Martin* promotes positive images of Black men, 20% disagreed. Forty-six percent of White participants disagreed they perceive *Martin* promotes positive images of Black men, 36% agreed and 18% had no opinion. Fifty percent of Female participants disagreed they perceive *Martin* promotes positive images of Black men, 17% agreed and 33% had no opinion. Fifty-five percent of Male participants agreed they perceive *Martin* promotes positive images of Black men, 36% disagreed and 9% had no opinion. Overall, 43% of the participants disagreed they perceive *Martin* promotes positive images of Black men, 35% agreed and 22% had no opinion. This data suggests Black, White, Female, and Male participants perceive *The Fresh Prince* as a program that promotes images of Black men that are more positive than *Martin*. The data also suggest White male participants perceive *Martin* as more positive than any other group.

Table 36 shows participants by group who perceive television situation comedies, *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* promote positive images of Black men. In Group A, 62.5% of the participants agreed they perceive *The Fresh Prince* promotes positive images of Black men, 25% disagreed and 12.5% had no opinion. In Group B, 62.5% agreed *The Fresh Prince* promotes positive images of Black men, 37% disagreed. Fifty-seven percent of Group C agreed they perceive *The Fresh Prince* promotes positive images of Black men, 14% disagreed and 27% had no opinion. In Group A, 62.5% of the participants disagreed they perceive *Martin* promotes positive images of Black men, 37.5% agreed. Twenty-five percent of Group B agreed they perceive *Martin* promotes positive images of Black men, 5% had no opinion. Forty-two percent of Group C participants agreed they perceive *Martin* promotes positive images of Black men, 29%

Table 36
Number and Percent of Participants' Perception Television Characters Promote Positive Images of Black Men After Viewing Focus Group Television Programs by Group

Question	I believe *The Fresh Prince* promotes positive images of Black men.					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	5	62.5	5	62.5	0	57
No Opinion	1	12.5	0	0	4	27
Disagree	2	25	3	37.5	2	14
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	1	0
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100
Question	I believe *Martin* promotes positive images of Black men.					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	3	37.5	2	25	3	42
No Opinion	0	0	3	37.5	2	29
Disagree	5	62.5	3	37.5	2	29
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100

disagreed and 29% had no opinion. This data suggests Groups A and B perceive *The Fresh Prince* as more positive and *Martin* as more negative, as opposed to Group C, which perceives both programs as positive.

Table 37 shows participants who know Black men they perceive having characteristics similar to Will and Martin's characters. Eighty-three percent of Black female participants agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Will's character, 17% strongly agreed. Fifty percent of Black male participants agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Will's character, 25% strongly agreed, and 17% disagreed. Ninety-two percent of Black participants agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Will's character, 8% disagreed. Sixty-six percent of White female participants agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Will's character, 34% disagreed. Eighty percent of White male participants agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Will's character. Forty-six percent of White participants strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Will's character, 27% agreed, and 27% disagreed. Eighty-three percent of Female participants agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men with characteristics similar to Will's character, 17% disagreed. Eight-two percent of Male participants agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Will's character, 18% disagreed. Overall, 83% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Will's character, 17% disagreed.

All Black female participants(100%) agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Martin's character. Eighty-three percent of Black male participants agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Martin's character, 17% strongly disagreed.

Table 37
Number and Percent of Participants' Perception They Know Black Men With Characteristics Similar to Television Characters After Viewing Focus Group Television Programs

Question	I know Black men who have characteristics similar to Will's character.																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	1	17	2	33	3	25	2	33	3	60	5	46	3	25	5	46	8	35
Agree	5	83	3	50	8	67	2	33	1	20	3	27	7	58	4	36	11	48
No Opinion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	1	17	1	8	2	34	1	20	3	27	2	17	2	18	4	17
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

Question	I know Black men who have characteristics similar to Martin's character.																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	3	50	2	33	5	42	0	0	2	40	0	18	3	25	4	36	7	30
Agree	3	50	3	50	6	50	3	50	2	40	3	48	6	50	5	46	11	48
No Opinion	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	17	0	0	1	9	1	8	0	0	1	4
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	33	1	20	6	27	2	17	1	9	3	13
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	17	1	8	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	9	1	5
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

Ninety-two percent agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Martin, 8% strongly disagreed. Fifty percent of White female participants agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Martin' character, 33% disagreed and 17% had no opinion. Eighty percent of White male participants agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Martin's character, 20% disagreed. Sixty-six percent of White participants agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Martin's character, 27% disagreed and 9% had no opinion. Seventy-five percent of Female participants agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Martin's character, 17% disagreed and 8% had no opinion. Eighty-two percent of Male participants agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Martin's character, 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Overall, 78% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Martin's character, 18% strongly disagreed, and 4% had no opinion. This data suggests that all of the participants in the study know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Will and Martin's characters.

Table 38 shows participants by group who know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Will and Martin's characters. In Group A, 87.5% agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Will's character, 12.5% disagreed. All of Group B participants(100%) agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Will's character. Fifty-eight percent of Group C agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Will's character, 42% disagreed. In Group A, 87.5% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Martin's character, 12.5% had no opinion. In Group B, 87.5% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they

Table 38
Number and Percent of Participants' Perception They Know Black Men With Characteristics Similar to Television Characters After Viewing Focus Group Television Programs by Group

Question	I know Black men who have characteristics similar to Will's character.					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	2	25	4	50	2	29
Agree	5	62.5	4	50	2	29
No Opinion	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	1	12.5	0	0	3	42
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100
Question	I know Black men who have characteristics similar to Martin's character.					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	3	37.5	3	37.5	1	14
Agree	4	50	4	50	3	42
No Opinion	1	12.5	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	3	42
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	12.5	0	0
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100

perceive as having characteristics similar to Martin's character, 12.5% strongly disagreed. Fifty-four percent of Group C agreed or strongly agreed they know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Martin's character, 42% disagreed. This data suggests Groups A and B know Black men they perceive as having characteristics similar to Will and Martin more than Group C.

Table 39 shows the participants' perception the plots of the episodes of *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* they viewed were similar to situations that happened in their life. Sixty-seven percent of Black female participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *The Fresh Prince* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 33% had no opinion. Sixty-six percent of Black male participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *The Fresh Prince* as similar to a situation in their life, 17% agreed, and 17% had no opinion. Sixty-seven percent of Black participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *The Fresh Prince* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 8% agreed and 25% had no opinion. Fifty percent of White female participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *The Fresh Prince* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 50% had no opinion. All of the White male participants(100%) disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *The Fresh Prince* as similar to a situation that happened in their life. Seventy-three percent of White participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *The Fresh Prince* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 37% had no opinion. Fifty-eight percent of Female participants strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *The Fresh Prince* as similar to a situation that happened in their life. Eighty-two percent of Male participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *The Fresh Prince* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 9% agreed and 9% had no opinion. Overall, 70% of the participants in the study disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this

Table 39
Number and Percent of Participants' Perception Episode Was Similar to a Situation That Happend in Their Life After Viewing the Programs by Group

Question	The plot of this episode of *The Fresh Prince* was similar to a situation that happened in my life.																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	0	0	1	17	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	1	4
No Opinion	2	33	1	17	3	25	3	50	0	0	3	27	5	42	1	9	6	26
Disagree	3	50	2	33	5	42	1	17	3	60	4	37	4	33	5	46	9	39
Strongly Disagree	1	17	2	33	3	25	2	33	2	40	4	36	3	25	4	36	7	31
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

Question	The plot of this episode of *Martin* was similar to a situation that happened in my life.																	
	Race												Sex					
	Blacks						Whites											
	BF		BM		Total Blacks		WF		WM		Total Whites		Females		Males		Total People	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	0	0	3	50	3	27	0	0	3	60	3	27	0	0	6	55	6	26
No Opinion	2	33	2	33	4	27	2	33	1	20	3	27	4	33	3	27	7	30
Disagree	4	67	0	0	4	27	3	50	0	0	3	27	7	58	0	0	7	31
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	17	1	17	1	17	1	20	2	18	1	9	2	18	3	13
n=23	6	100	6	100	12	100	6	100	5	100	11	100	12	100	11	100	23	100

episode of *The Fresh Prince* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 4% agreed and 26% had no opinion.

Sixty-seven percent of Black female participants disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *Martin* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 33% had no opinion. Fifty percent of Black male participants agreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *Martin* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 17% strongly disagreed, and 33% had no opinion. Forty-four percent of Black participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *Martin* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 27% agreed and 27% had no opinion. Sixty-seven percent of White female participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *Martin* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 33% had no opinion. Sixty percent of White male participants agreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *Martin* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 20% strongly disagreed. Forty-five percent of Whites disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of Martin as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 27% agreed and 2% had no opinion. Sixty-seven percent of Female participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *Martin* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 33% had no opinion. Fifty-five percent of Male participants agreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *Martin* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 18% strongly disagreed and 27% had no opinion. Overall, 44% of the participants in the study disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *Martin* as similar to a sitution that happened in their life, 26% agreed and 30% had no opinion. This data suggests the majority of the participants did not perceive the episode of *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* they viewed as similar to a situation that has happened in their lives. However, the majority of the Male participants perceive the episode of *Martin* as similar to a sitiuation that happened in their lives.

Table 40 shows by groups the participants' perception the plots of the episodes of *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* they viewed were similar to situations that happened in their life. Seventy-five percent of Group A disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *The Fresh Prince* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 12% had no opinion. In Group B, 62.5% of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 37.5% had no opinion. Seventy-one percent of Group C disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *The Fresh Prince* as similar to a situation that happend in their life, 29% had no opinion. In Group A, 37.5% agreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *Martin* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 37.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 25% had no opinion. Fifty percent of Group B disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of Martin as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 12.5% agreed and 37.5% had no opinion. Forty-two percent of Group C disagreed or strongly disagreed they perceive the plot of this episode of *Martin* as similar to a situation that happened in their life, 29% had no opinion. This data suggests the majority of the participants in each group did not perceive the plot of these episodes of *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* as similar to situations that have happened in their life.

Discussion

The data in Tables 33-40 assesses the participants perception of the television programs, *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and *Martin* after they have watched it. After watching *The Fresh Prince*, the data suggests Black females did not significantly change their perception of Will or Martin. However, the data suggests Black male participants perceived Will as a more positive reflection of Black men and Martin as negative reflection of Black men. The data also suggests White female participants do not perceive Will or Martin as positive reflections of Black men. White male participants

Table 40
Number and Percent of Participants' Perception Episode Was Similar to a Situation That Happend in Their Life After Viewing Focus Group Television Programs by Groups

Question	The plot of this episode of *The Fresh Prince* was similar to a situation that happened in my life					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	1	12.5	0	0	0	0
No Opinion	1	12.5	3	37.5	2	29
Disagree	4	58	2	25	3	42
Strongly Disagree	2	25	3	37.5	2	29
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100
Question	The plot of this episode of *Martin* was similar to a situation that happened in my life.					
	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	3	37.5	1	12.5	2	29
No Opinion	2	25	3	37.5	2	29
Disagree	2	2.5	3	37.5	2	20
Strongly Disagree	1	12.5	1	12.5	1	14
n=23	8	100	8	100	7	100

indicate they perceive quite the opposite. The data suggests they perceive Will and Martin as positive reflections of Black men. The data also suggests that Female participants generally perceived Will as a more positive reflection of Black men than Martin. Overall, the research suggests Will's character is perceived by the participants as a more positive reflection of Black men than Martin's character. In addition, the data suggests the individual groups were divided on this question.

Further, the data suggests that all the participants Black, White, Male, Female, Groups A, B, and C perceive *The Fresh Prince* as promoting positive images of Black men. The data also suggests White male participants perceiving *Martin.* promote positive images of Black men. However, the data is clear as to how Black male, White female, and Female participants perceive *Martin*. The data suggest they all overwhelmingly disagreed they perceive *Martin* as promoting positive images of Black men. The data concerning participants' perception they know Black men with characteristics similar to Will and Martin suggests that the majority of the participants in the study agreed they perceive someone they knew as having characteristics similar to Will and/or Martin. Finally, the data suggests that the majority of the participants did not perceive the episode they viewed as similar to a situation that has happened in their life.

Summary

The data is clear as to how many of the participants perceive Will and Martin's characters on the two programs. Will is perceived as more positive and Martin is perceived as less positive. White females and Black males tend to perceive Will more positively and Martin as less positive. Based on these Pre and Post Test questionnaires, the data suggest that these two characters are perceived differently.

Section Four

Participant's Responses to Open-ended Questions During Videotaped Discussion

The format for the discussion segment of the study was the same for all three groups. The moderator presented several open-ended questions to each group. Even though the order in which the questions were asked differed in each group, most of the questions that were asked remained the same for all three groups. This section will summarize participants' responses to these questions by race, sex, and group as observed from the videotape by the researcher.

Question #1 In general, what did you think about these two programs?

In general, Black females said the programs were entertaining. Some said they could not relate to *The Fresh Prince* but could relate to the male and female relationships on *Martin*. Black males said the programs were in general stereotypical and in some ways realistic. They said the plots were easy to relate to and they watched them for their entertainment value. They also felt that the characters on the programs were exaggerated. In general, White females and White males thought the programs were entertaining and fun to watch. In general all three groups felt both of the programs were entertaining and funny.

Question #2 What are your thoughts about Martin's character on *Martin*?

Black females felt his character was greatly exaggerated. Many thought his character was rude, vulgar, conceited and did not think that younger children should be watching the program. However, others felt that Martin's character was a strong person with confidence. Black males also saw Martin's character as rude, disgusting, and over

exaggerated, but outgoing and confident. Some Black males felt the show perpetuated a lot of stereotypes like television programs in the past, other said they thought the portrayal was realistic and they could relate to the situations on the program. Blacks who thought the program was entertaining, however, expressed concern that many stereotypes continue to be perpetuated though the program.

In general, White females did not like Martin. They did not like the way he treated women. They thought his character was exaggerated and unrealistic. Many felt his character was immature and idiotic, however, they said they found themselves laughing at him during the program. In general, White males felt Martin's character was funny, but saw him as an exaggeration of Black males. They thought he was rude, obnoxious, and irresponsible, yet some felt he was realistic as well. In general, Whites thought Martin's character was funny, however, the majority of attributes they expressed about this character was negative. In general, Females thought he was funny and could relate to the male and female relationship situations on the program. On the other hand, many disapproved of his mannerisms, language, and interaction with women. In general, Male participants thought Martin was entertaining, however, felt his character was over exaggerated and stereotypical of Black males. In general, Group A saw Martin's character confident about himself and entertaining, yet unrealistic, rude, over exaggerated and stereotypical. Group B thought Martin's character was funny, but unrealistic, goofy, stereotypical. Although Group C thought Martin's character was funny, they also felt he was immature and irresponsible.

Question #3 In general, what did you think about Will's character on *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*?

In general, Black females saw Will's character as hardworking and down-to-earth. They did not like the way he disrespected women, but saw him as positive because he was in college trying to better his life. Black males generally said Will's character was

positive because he tries to maintain his African-American identity. They did believe that in many ways his character is stereotyped and exaggerated. In general, Blacks liked Will's character. They found him engaging and funny, however, they felt that in many ways he portrayed negative stereotypes. White females, in general, liked Will's character as well. They did see him as exaggerated, immature and disrespectful to women, but they thought he was entertaining and positive because he was in school with a job. In general, White males thought Will's character was intelligent and funny. Even though they thought he was obnoxious, they felt there were parts of Will's character that were decent and they could relate to him more. Many Female participants thought he was immature and disrespectful to women, however, they found him funny and entertaining. Male participants said that Will's character was exaggerated and obnoxious, but funny and entertaining as well. In general, all three groups thought Will's character was positive, even though he portrayed negative stereotypes.

Question #4 In general, what is your impression of the following characters on *Martin*: Sheneneh(pronounced Sha-nay-nay), Tommy, Cole, Pam, and Gina?

In general, Black female participants perceived Sheneneh as a combination of a variety of people. They perceived her as being a stereotypical Black female character that was a good person, yet over exaggerated. Black males, in general, perceived Sheneneh as a stereotype of a typical inner city, low income Black female. They saw her as voicetrous, extravagant, and jealous of Gina and Martin, yet honest and funny. In general, White females and Males perceived Sheneneh as a stereotype of Black females. All three groups including Female and Male participants perceived Sheneneh as a funny character, yet stereotypical.

In general, Black females perceived Tommy as wise, educated, and level-headed. Black males generally perceived him as a strong male character and Martin's alter-ego. White females perceived him as more mature and realistic than Martin's character. White

males perceived Tommy as very likable and more of an adult and down-to-earth than Martin's character. In general, Females and Males and all three groups liked Tommy and perceived him as being a positive character. Conversely each group of participants perceived Cole's character as similar to Martin. They saw Tommy as Martin's angel and Cole as Martin's devil.

In general, Black females and Black males perceived Pam's character as loud and obnoxious, yet as a good friend and realistic character. Some Blacks did not like the manner in which Pam and Martin treated each other, however, others felt the type of relationship that existed between them is what entertained them. White females and White males perceived Pam as a funny and a realistic good friend to Gina. White females and males perceived Gina, Pam, and Tommy as more realistic than Martin and Cole. Each group perceived Pam, Gina, Tommy and Cole as significant characters that help create the comedic effect on the program.

Question #5 In general, what is your impression of the following characters on *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*: Carlton, Hillary, Parents, Jeffrey the Butler?

In general, Black females perceived Carlton's character as arrogant, spoiled, and a big contrast to Will and Martin's characters. Many felt that he was insulting and offensive to Black people. Black males, in general, perceived Carlton as a character that knows about Black History but has not experienced being Black. In general, Blacks perceive Carlton as being an Uncle Tom that does not want to loose his Bourgeoisie title. White Females and Males perceive Carlton as being an uppity nerd stereotype and unrealistic. Group A perceive Carlton as being a Black male character that is dependent on his parent's money and not having a sense of blackness. Group B and C perceived Carlton as being very unrealistic. They see him as a character on the program to interact with Will for comedic effect.

In general, Black females perceived Hillary as a stereotype. They thought her character was exaggerated and unrealistic. Black males, in general, perceived Hillary as a blond white female stereotype. Blacks perceived Hillary as attractive, yet unrealistic and dependent on her parents for everything in her life. White females and White males, in general, perceived Hillary as an exaggerated stereotype and unrealistic character. Group A perceived Hillary as a spoiled, rich Black female with no sense of independence. Groups B and C perceived Hillary as a classic valley girl stereotype that is over exaggerated on the program. All of the groups, in general, perceived the parents as typical upper-class parents that help their children grow and develop into adults except for Group A. Participants in Group A generally thought of the parents as being unrealistic because of the way they perceived their children being raised. Group A said that if there parents had worked hard to be that successful, then they would have tried to instill some sense of African-American identity within their children(Carlton & Hillary). All the groups generally perceived Jeffrey the Butler as a character in the background, observing the goings on of the other characters and situations on the program.

Question #6 In general, do you see the characters on *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and *Martin* as positive or negative?

In general Black participants, Female and Male, and participants in Group A perceived the characters of these two programs as negative. However, they thought there were positive aspects to many of the characters. They felt that since there were not a large number of programs on television with Black people in starring roles, it is difficult to complain. However, they noted several times the idea that there is no moderation with Black characters on these programs. They believe these characters on *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* and other shows seem to always be portrayal in one extreme or the other. The television situation comedy *Roc* was noted as being a program that portrayed more balance in the characterizations of Blacks.

In general, White females perceived Martin's character as negative, yet perceived the other characters on the program as positive. White males perceived Martin and Will as obnoxious, yet say they are positive because they have an education, relationships, and good futures. Groups B and C in general perceived these characters as entertaining and funny, yet stereotypical and negative.

Question #7 Are there racial stereotypes on television? If so, what are they?

In general, Black females and Black males and Groups A and B perceived Black men as being stereotyped on television as committed, chauvinistic, and immature. They also perceived other groups as being stereotyped as well, such as, Native Americans, Hispanics, Italians, Black females, Black children, Chinese, and Japanese. Group C, in general, perceived that racial stereotypes do exist on television.

Discussion

Group Observations

The focus groups were designed to give the participants an opportunity to express their opinions and concerns and perceptions of the two programs they view and other issues they choose. These sessions were videotaped. The researcher observed the tapes for content as well as nonverbal communications. A formal content analysis was not designed for this project, the research simply made several general observations of the groups.

Twenty-three individuals participated in the sessions. The groups were designed to accommodate eight people per group. Group A, which consisted of four Black females and four Black males appeared, based on observation more interactive. Most of the participants knew each other, therefore, they displayed no inhibitions during this session. Since the University of Tennessee as a small number of Black students, faculty and staff, the likelihood of Blacks coming in contact with other Blacks they know in situations such

as this focus group is not uncommon. Since they knew each other the researcher observed them opening up from the beginning of the discussion until the end. The discussion segment endured for one hour and fifteen minutes, the longest of any group.

Group B consisted of two Black females, two White females, two Black males and two White males. Again, there were a few people in this group more familiar with each other, therefore, the researcher observed more of the same bonding during the discussion as in Group A. The researcher observed the group challenging each other's answers or asking for qualification of certain answers. The session lasted approximated on hour. Group C, which consisted of four White females and three White males(one White male did not attend), on the other hand, did not open up as well as Groups A and B. This is probably a result of most of the participants being unfamiliar with each other. This discussion amongst the group was different from Groups A and B in that they did not elaborate a great deal in responding to the questions. In the previous groups, the moderator was unable to finish many of the prepared questions. In Group C, the questions and session was complete in forty-five minutes.

Summary of Responses

The responses by the Black female participants suggest they perceived Martin as negative. They perceive his character as over exaggerated, rude, vulgar, and immature. They liked Martin's commitment to his relationship with his girlfriend, his friendships and self-confidence. However, Black females in the study collectively disliked Martin's character. White females, expressed the same sentiment about Martin's character. In fact, it was very difficult for them to express many positive aspects of his character. Of course, it was many of the White females first time viewing the program. This fact has to be taken into consideration, however, the Black female participants indicated they watched *Martin* more than they watched *The Fresh Prince* and they perceived Martin the

same way. The responses by White female participants suggest they perceive Martin's as a negative.

On the other hand, Black females' responses would suggest that they generally perceived Will's character as positive. Even though they said they thought he was exaggerated and too silly, they still perceived him as being positive. In the same way, the White female participants' responses would suggest that even though they dislike Will's antics and over exaggerated behaviors, they perceive him as positive. White male participants' responses would suggest they perceive both Martin and Will as positive characters. They expressed concerns about them acting in a stereotypical manner, however, their responses would suggest that they perceive them as being positive characters.

Black male participants' responses would suggest that they are aware of the stereotypes that exist on these programs. Their responses would indicate that they are used to seeing stereotypes of themselves. These responses also suggest that they see Will and Martin as both positive and negative. They expressed dissatisfaction with the portrayal of Black males on television situation comedies, however, their responses suggest there is not a great deal they can do about these stereotypes except for educating others.

Section Five

Participants' Responses to Wrap-up Questionnaire

Table 41 shows the top three and four words most frequently assigned to Will and Martin. Black female participants and Black male participants used many of the same words to describe Will and Martin, however, the words 'arrogant' and 'aggressive' were mostly used to describe Martin. White female participants and White male participants also used many of the same words to describe Will and Martin. However, the words, 'loud', 'boastful,' and 'arrogant' were most frequently used to describe Martin. Female participants described Will more frequently with 'humorous and 'happy-go-lucky.' They used 'arrogant' and boastful' more frequently to describe Martin. Male participants describe both Will and Martin more frequently as 'talkative.' However, they described Martin more frequently with words such as, 'aggressive' and 'ostentatious.'

Group A described Will more frequently as 'humorous,' 'loyal to family ties,' and 'talkative.' Martin was described more frequently as 'arrogant', 'rude,' and 'humorous.' Group B described Will more frequently as 'happy-go-lucky,' 'jovial', and 'talkative.' Martin was described more frequently as 'talkative,' boastful,' and 'pleasure-loving.' Group C described Will more frequently as 'humorous,' 'witty,' and 'ostentatious.' Martin was described more frequently as 'pleasure-loving,' talkative,' and 'ostentatious.' Overall the participants described Will more frequently as 'humorous,' ostentatious,' and 'jovial.' They used the following words more frequently to describe Martin: 'talkative,' 'boastful,' and 'arrogant.' See Appendix I for the complete list of the words and frequencies used to describe Will and Martin.

TABLE 41
Words Participants Used to Describe Will and Martin

Race					
Blacks					
BF		BM		Total Blacks	
Will	Martin	Will	Martin	Will	Martin
happy-go-lucky(4)	arrogant(5)	talkative(3)	talkative(4)	humorous(7)	talkative(8)
humorous(4)	humorous(5)	humorous(3)	jovial(4)	talkative(6)	arrogant(5)
boastful(3)	boastful(4)	straightforward (3)	aggressive(3)	happy-go-lucky(4)	humorous(5)
Whites					
WF		WM		Total Whites	
Will	Martin	Will	Martin	Will	Martin
humorous(6)	loud(3)	ostentatious(5)	talkative(4)	humorous(10)	loud(6)
happy-go-lucky(5)	arrogant(3)	talkative(5)	loud(3)	ostentatious(9)	boastful(5)
witty(5)	pleasure-loving(3)	humorous(4)	ostentatious(3)	jovial(8)	talkative(4)
Sex					
Females		Males		Total People	
Will	Martin	Will	Martin	Will	Martin
humorous(10)	arrogant(8)	talkative(8)	talkative(8)	humorous(17)	talkative(12)
happy-go-lucky(9)	humorous(5)	humorous(7)	aggressive(6)	ostentatious(12)	boastful(9)
ostentatious(7)	boastful(6)	witty(7)	ostentatious(6)	jovial(11)	arrogant(8)
jovial(7)	argumentative(6)	ostentatious(5)	witty(6)	talkative(11)	loud(6)
Group A		Group B		Group C	
Will	Martin	Will	Martin	Will	Martin
humorous(4)	arrogant(5)	happy-go-lucky(7)	talkative(6)	humorous(6)	pleasure-loving(4)
loyal to family ties(4)	rude(5)	jovial(7)	boastful(4)	witty(6)	talkative(4)
talkative(4)	humorous(4)	talkative(7)	pleasure-loving(4)	ostentatious(6)	ostentatious(4)
	talkative(4)	ostentatious(6)			
		witty(6)			

Wrap-Up Questionnaire Responses

The following is a summary by race, sex, and group of participants' responses to each of the seven open-ended questions on the Wrap-up questionnaire.

How do you feel about interacting with people of another race?

In general, Black females said they did not have a problem interacting with people of races. They said they are comfortable learning from others. Black males said they do not have a problem with interacting with other people. Many said they only wanted to be respected by other races of people. In general, White females and White males said they did not have a problem interacting with other people. They said they enjoyed having a variety of people as friends. The Female and Male participants and each individual group noted they had no concerns or problem interacting with other races.

Do you believe there are racial stereotypes on television?
If so, how do you feel about these racial stereotypes?

In general, Black females agreed there are racial stereotypes on television. They said they realize that this stereotyping is common and believe that it is their individual responsibility to teach those who do not interact with Black people on a regular basis about these stereotypes. Black males, in general, said that they do not like the stereotypes that continue to exist. They said that television uses these stereotypes to boost ratings points. White females said they believe these stereotypes exist and many of them are negative towards people of different races, religions and genders. White males said they also believe these stereotypes exist on television sometimes to be humorous, but generally taken too far. Both genders and all three groups said they felt as though all groups are stereotyped on television, however, some groups are stereotyped more frequently.

What did you like most about Will's character?

In general, Black females said they like the fact that Will was in college and working. They also like his wit, outgoing attitude, friendliness, and his strong sense of Black pride. Black males said they like Will's humor and his ability to be himself. They liked his honesty, down-to-earth attitude, and sense of Black pride. White females liked Will's light-hearted attitude, humor, wit, and the depth and realism of his character. White males said they liked Will's wit, humor, and likable attitude. Both genders and all three groups said they generally liked Will's sense of humor and easy-going attitude.

What did you dislike about Will's character?

In general, Black females said they disliked Will's immaturity and the way he treats women. Black males said they disliked Will's buffoonery and antic because it takes away from the more serious and intelligent aspects of his character. White females said they thought he was sometimes too silly and exaggerated. They also disliked Will's sexual comments he makes to women. White males said they dislike his loudness and they think he is too obnoxious sometimes. Most of the Females and Males and all three groups said they disliked aspects about Will's character that were over exaggerated.

What did you like most about Martin's character?

In general, Black females said they like Martin's humor, self-confidence, and commitment to a relationship. Black males said they like Martin's humor, honesty, decisiveness, and the manner in which he interacts with his friends. In general, most White females said they like nothing about Martin's character, however, one White female said he was sometimes humorous. White males said they liked Martin's humor. In general, the Female and Male participants and each group said they liked Martin's humor.

What did you dislike about Martin's character?

Black females said they did not like Martin's rude, obnoxious, stubborn, and chauvinistic behaviors. They said they dislike his vulgarity and narrow-minded attitude. Black males said they dislike how Martin treated Gina, his rudeness, and his distorted view of relationships. They said that he can be offensive and insulting at times. White females said disliked the way Martin treated women, they said he was rude, obnoxious, and easily influenced by his friends. They said he did not speak intelligently and was immature for his age. White males said they dislike Martin's irresponsibility and offensive behavior. In general, the Females in the study disliked Martin's behavior towards women. The Males in, the study disliked his obnoxiousness. Overall, the three individual groups said they dislike Martin's over exaggerated behaviors.

Do you believe Black men are stereotyped on television situation comedies?
Yes____ No____

If you answered Yes or No, please explain why you feel this way.

All Black females said they believed Black men are stereotyped on television comedies. They said characteristics of Black men are exaggerated to the extreme for comedies. Many said Black men are stereotyped so often that their more positive characteristics are never shown. Black male participants said Black men are stereotyped because television uses them to obtain and maintain ratings. They said the director and producers of the television programs only produce what they want to see. They said that a true depiction of Black men has not been created and will not be created as long as these programs that portray Black men as buffoons still exist.

White females said they believe Black men are stereotyped on television situation comedies. They said Black men are always portrayed as one extreme or the other such as, extremely rich or poor, dumb or with negative attitudes towards women. White male participants said they believed Black men are stereotyped. They said they are portrayed

as goofy and immature. However, they said they realize that this is the way comedy shows operate and in order to keep the ratings the stereotypes are still perpetuated. They also said that Black men as well as other races of people are stereotyped on television. Overall, each group said they believed Black men are stereotyped on television situation comedies. They said this stereotyping was created a long time ago and is difficult to change.

Discussion

Word Descriptors of Will and Martin

From a list of eighty-four words, participants chose those they perceive to describe Will and Martin. Black and White males both perceived Will and Martin as talkative and humorous. On the other hand, the Female participants used words such as, happy-go-lucky, humorous, and jovial most frequently to describe Will. They use words such as, arrogant, loud, and boastful more frequently to describe Martin. This data suggests that the Male participants generally perceive Will and Martin as positive characters and the Female participants perceived Will as positive and Martin as negative. Groups B and C generally used some of the same words to described Will and Martin, however, Group A describe Martin as rude and arrogant, words the other groups did not use more frequently. This may suggest that Group A perceived Martin slightly more negative than the other groups.

Responses to Open-ended Questions

The responses made by Black participants would suggest they believe racial stereotypes exist on television situation comedies, especially for Black males. Their responses would also suggest they feel a need of the producer and director, and writers of television programs to begin to depict Blacks in realistic characters. Even though they

say in their responses they are entertained by the shows and enjoy laughing, they watch reluctantly because they know that the programs are stereotypes of Black people. White participants' responses would suggest they generally agree that stereotypes do exist on television. However, their responses also suggest they find the characters of Will and Martin as entertaining and funny. Overall, the participants indicated they are aware of the perception of Black males as being stereotypes on television situation comedies and on television in general.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to assess the perception of stereotypes of Black males on television situation comedies. Using two popular television situation comedies starring Black males as leading actors, this pilot study attempted to discover how individuals perceived Black male characters. The twenty-three participants in the focus groups shared important information that enabled this research to achieve its goal of learning more about perceptions of stereotypes. By focusing specifically on Black males, the study was able to pinpoint ideas and themes common to stereotypes of all people.

Five research questions were developed to guide the research. The research provided information to answer these questions, however, these answers are merely a component of a larger answer to larger questions.

* Research question 1 asked: What is the perceived image of Black male characters in television situation comedies? The data based on these twenty-three individuals, suggests Black male characters on television situation comedies are perceived as entertaining, humorous, funny, talkative, and ostentatious. The data also suggests, however, they are perceived as overzealous sexually, silly, goofy, ignorant, irresponsible, and immature. In addition, the research suggests Black males are also perceived as treating women badly. This focus group study suggests that Black males' overall image on television situation comedies is a stereotype. The participants in this study perceived Black males as over exaggerated characters that entertain.

* Research Question 2 asked: How are Black male characters on television situation comedies perceived by Black males, Black females, White

males, and White females? Based on the examination and assessment of the perceptions of the twenty-three participants in this study, the data suggests Black male participants generally perceive Black male characters on television situation comedies as entertaining, funny, humorous, witty, and self-confident. On the other hand, Black males adamantly expressed their opinions that these characters are not a true depiction of Black men. The research also suggests that even though Black males perceive these characters as funny and sometimes entertaining to watch, they believe these characters are one-dimension, exaggerated stereotypes and buffoons that have existed on television for years.

This research suggests Black females perceive Black male characters on television situation comedies as negative stereotypes. They, like the Black male participants, enjoyed watching them for entertainment and fun. However, the data suggests Black females recognize many of the Black male characters they enjoy watching on television situation comedies are merely over exaggerated stereotypes of Black males. The research suggests they perceived some qualities in characters such as, Will and Martin, as redeemable, however, they disliked Black male characters' rudeness, immaturity, and attitude and treatment of women.

Further, White females perceived Black male characters as negative stereotypes as well. The data suggests they perceived the actions, language and mannerisms of some of the characters as over exaggerated. The information in the study also suggests White males perceive Black males on television situation comedies as entertaining and funny. This data suggests White males perceive Black male characters on television situation comedies as entertaining and funny more than they perceive them as negative stereotypes.

* Research Question 3 asked: Do Blacks and Whites perceive Black male characters on television situation comedies as positive or negative? The data

compiled in this study suggests Blacks and Whites perceived Black male characters on television situation comedies as positive and negative depending upon who was the Black male character. The data suggests Will's character was generally perceived as positive and Martin's character was generally perceived as negative. Even though the data does suggest the majority of Black and White participants in the study agreed that Black male characters were stereotyped negatively on television situations, there was a percentage of the participants that did not perceive that Black males were not stereotyped negatively. Although, Black and White participants did discuss the positive qualities they perceived in these characters, they expressed how these positive traits were many times overshadowed by the negative images of these characters due to over exaggerations.

* Research Question 4 asked: How does the perception of Black male characters on situation comedies relate to race, sex, socioeconomic status, social interaction with Black males, and the amount of time spent viewing Black males on television situation comedies? The data derived from the participants in the focus groups suggests, White and Black participants, in general, perceived Black males were stereotyped on television comedies. The research also suggests the Female participants perceived Will and Martin as being sexist, harassing and rude to women. Conversely, the data suggests the Male participants did not express those opinions as frequently as the Female participants. The Male participants frequently described Will and Martin as humorous, witty, and talkative.

The research demonstrated that the majority of the White participants did not have Black males as close friends and had not seen either of the two programs viewed in the study. These elements suggest that their perception of Black males on television situation comedies is altogether different than Black participants

who had Black males as close friends and have watched many episodes of *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin*. This research may also suggest that the more time is spent watching television programs featuring Black males coupled with personal experiences and interaction with more Black males may vary the perception of Black males on television situation comedies as indicated by Ziegler's mass media enculturation theory.

* Research Question 5 asked: How does the perception of Black male characters on television situation comedies relate to the overall perception Blacks and Whites have of Black males in general? The data in this study suggests that the participants' experience and interaction with Black males before they watch television is crucial to the development of their perceptions of Black males after they watch television. For example, the data suggests Black participants had close friends who were Black males, Black male teachers, and they spend a great deal of time watching Black males on television. Therefore, this data suggests their perception of Black males after they have watched television will be different because, as the data suggests in the discussion section of the study, that the Black participants recognized the fact that Black males were being stereotyped. The data suggests that the White participants did not have these experiences, therefore, their perception of Black males after they watch television are somewhat different. The degree to which their perception is different is another question that warrants attention.

Conclusions

There is an old saying, "Perception is reality." This saying, short and simple, is probably one of the most important ideas in the communications business. The television, though is has been the most innovative invention in the twentieth century, has

the ability to influence our thoughts and to a certain extent control parts of our lives. Since this machine has so much power to transmit messages and influence the decision-making process for some people, it is a tool that can work as a positive influence and as a negative influence. As far as portrayals of Blacks and other minorities, especially Black Males, the television as been a negative influence.

Bill Cosby suggested on *The Arsenio Hall Show* one evening that television has a way of making a "drive-by appearance" of the Black community. He meant that television has a way of driving by a Black community, taking a snap shot of what it sees and creates television programming based on that one day it "drove by" the Black community. This image is then presented to America as the truth about the real life experiences of the Black community. This is the way this researcher believes Black males are stereotyped on television situation comedies. The images of Will and Carlton from *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* , Martin, Tommy and Cole from *Martin*, are in many ways similar to Jimmy 'J.J." Walker from *Good Times*., George Jefferson from *The Jefferson's*, and the original 'Sambo' character discussed in Chapter Three. These images have been a part of network television in America for so long, America has been desensitized to these images. These images were so prevalent during the 1970s and are now prevalent again in the 1990s that America has grown to expect the laughing, smiling, dancing, and singing 'darkey.'

In the early days of film, Black males portrayed characters that were less than desirable, such as butlers, janitors, bellhops, and shoe shine boys. The role Black males play on film and on television has been upgraded since then, however, the stereotypes continue to thrive on television situation comedies. Even though the main focus of a television comedy is to make audiences laugh, characters do not have to be one-dimensional to create laughter. Black males play characters that are extreme over exaggerations of characters that are never multidimensional. The television situation comedy concept has been one of the most successful types of television programming in

the history of television broadcasting. However, for Black males, this concept has been worn thin. Where are the serious programs about Black people on today's television tube? There does not appear to be any.

Individuals have their own concepts of reality and what they perceive to be real. These concepts are developed through their experience of everyday life. As Ziegler notes in the mass media enculturation theory, people process the information they receive and develop these concepts of reality based on the interactions in their lives. This research has shown how Whites who do not interact with Black males and never spend time acquiring information about Black males, whether through personal contact or television, may perceive Black males on television differently when they finally watch programs featuring Black male characters. These White participants may have had very little information processed about Black males and the information they had processed was a rap video they had seen flipping by the Black Entertainment Television cable channel with the remote control. These White participants have perhaps being simply 'driving by' Black males and choosing a few characteristics about them to store in their mind. Therefore, when it was time to process new information about Black male on *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin*, the White participants perception of Will and Martin was in many ways different than the Black participants.

Stereotypes about Black males and other races have existed and will continue as long as television continues to perpetuate them in television situation comedies. As stated in the introduction, the Kerner Commission concluded that it was this issue of stereotypes and negative images on television that was one of the catalysts to the civil unrest in the 1960s. Black programming was added to prime time programming and the 'Sambo' lived again. Certainly, the actors not at fault because they were and still are trying to make a living. It is the writers and producers of these programs that this type of research should focus concentration. Since many of the executive producers of the networks may not have come in contact with Black males on a daily basis or did not grow

up in an integrated neighborhood, it is reasonable to conclude their perception of Blacks may be different than someone who has had many experiences with Black males and Black people.

One of the most consistent words used in the discussion section of this research, especially in Group A, was the word 'moderation'. Many Black participants perceived the characters on the television situation comedies were created to portray one extreme or the other. Either Black males are very smart, very rich or very dumb and poor. The Black participants were concerned that this will be a never-ending cycle of Black male portrayals on television situation comedies. Has America had enough of Black television situation comedies? When will America see an intelligent, well-rounded, career oriented, Black man on a prime time television drama? America has only seen Black males laugh, dance, and sing on television. While Black entertainment is a positive form of expression and art that has grown from Black history, how then, will America ever see Blacks as real people. This researcher recognizes that there are a number of great programs on television featuring Blacks that reflect positive images. However, they are scarce. America's perception of Black males is increasingly becoming a snapshot of *The Fresh Prince* and *Martin* .

Limitations of the Study

This study was designed to assess perceptions of stereotypes of individuals in a focus group setting utilizing a moderator. The selection of a White male as the moderator could have hindered the results. Since the three groups varied in their racial balance, it is possible that each group interacted differently to the moderator. In addition, the moderator's body language, mannerisms, voice modulations, and overall nonverbal communication may have also effected how the participants responded to him. The moderator was a University of Tennessee graduate student in the College of

Communications. He was a good communicator, but not a seasoned professional research moderator. The researcher spent approximately three to four days preparing the moderator for the sessions. The training consisted of outlining the procedure of conducting the sessions and outlining questions for the discussion group. His inexperience may possibly have effected how he conducted the sessions. Another limitation of the study was the fact that the moderator was only heard and not seen on the video. Therefore, his nonverbal communication could not be examined by the researcher observing the discussion group videos.

Recommendations for Further Research

More research concentrating specifically on Black males would provide a better insight into the creation of stereotypes and perceptions of these stereotypes. A more in-depth quantitative analysis of individuals' social interaction with Black males and their time spent watching Black males on television might provide an understanding of how people may possibly be desensitized by Black male stereotypes on television. The research may consist of a sample of 400 hundred Blacks and 400 Whites. Each sample may be administered questionnaires containing information such as, age, income, current residence, places lived, places traveled, and the number of Black males that are friends, neighbors, business associates, athletic team partners, etc. This information can then be examined for correlation patterns with these individuals' time spent watching television and Black males on television programs or the news.

Further research may also consist of a content analysis of negative stereotypes on television news programs. Several newscasts can be examined for their story content concerning Blacks and Whites and individuals' perceptions of Blacks and Whites in these stories. Income levels and social differences amongst Blacks and Whites and their perceptions of Black males stereotypes is another area that more research could focus

attention. In addition, another focus group may be developed with perhaps four groups consisting of a variety of people, such as in this study. The focus group may also be led by a variety of moderators. This research also recommends that the issue of gender and Black male stereotypes is examined further. Females and Males perceptions of the Black males in this study were found to be different. Perhaps a study can be designed to assess specifically Females and Males perceptions of Black male characters on television.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FOCUS GROUP SCREENING QUESTIONS

1. NAME:_____
   (first) (last)

2. AGE: a). Under 18
   b). 18-24
   c). 25-35
   d). 36-45
   e). over 45

3. RACE:
   a). Black
   b). White
   c). American Indian
   d). Asian
   e). Hispanic
   f). Other

3. STUDENT? Yes___ No___

   If Yes, Classification:

   a). Freshman
   b). Sophomore
   c). Junior
   d). Senior
   e). Graduate Student

   If No, Occupation:_____

4. How often do you watch television?
   a). 0-2 hours?
   b). 2-4 hours?
   c). 4-6 hours?
   d). 6 or more hours?

5. Here's a list of television programs. As I read through the list, respond by saying "Yes" if you have watched any of them at least once. Respond by saying "No" if you have not watched them at least once.

	Yes	No		Yes	No
60 Minutes	___	___	90210	___	___
Days of Our Lives	___	___	Guiding Light	___	___
Seinfeld	___	___	Martin	___	___
Oprah Winfrey	___	___	Donahue	___	___
NYPD Blue	___	___	Good Morning Am...	___	___
Home Improvement	___	___	CNN	___	___
The Price is Right	___	___	Black Ent. TV	___	___
Fresh Prince/Bel Air	___	___	Sat. Night Live	___	___
Rescue 911	___	___	MTV Top 21 Count..	___	___

6. Are you available in the evening? After 5pm
   Yes___ No___

7. ADDRESS:_____

   _____

8. PHONE:_____

APPENDIX B

MODERATOR'S SCRIPT FOR FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

Opening:

"I would first like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. My name is ___ and I will be your group leader for this session.

I would like for everyone to take a deep breath and relax. The organizers of this project have taken great care to make this a comfortable and rewarding experience for each of you. The reward being the fifteen dollars you will receive at the end of this session. However, we hope that through your participation and input into this project, you will also learn more about television.

Our first task today will be reading this informed consent form thoroughly and signing it."

ADMINISTER INFORMED CONSENT FORMS.
GIVE PARTICIPANTS CHANCE TO READ AND SIGN.
ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS PARTICIPANTS MAY HAVE ABOUT THE FORM.
TAKE UP ALL SIGN FORMS AND PROCEED TO NEXT SECTION.

"We will now begin the next portion of the session. Please fill out this short questionnaire. Please answer all the questions as thoroughly as possible. Work individually. Raise your hand if you have a question concerning the questionnaire."

ADMINISTER PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE.
ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS PARTICIPANTS MAY HAVE ABOUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

"At this time we will begin viewing two 30 minute television programs. Before and after each television program, I will give you a very short questionnaire to fill out. Let's begin."

ADMINISTER BEFORE AND AFTER QUESTIONNAIRES BEFORE AND AFTER EACH TELEVISION PROGRAM.

"It's now time to talk for a little while about these television programs. We would like everyone to participate. We would like everyone to share their opinions, whatever they may be. I'm just going to start the discussion with a few questions and we'll move forward from there."

Key questions:

What did you think about these programs?
What are your thoughts about *Martin*?
Encourage discussion about Martin's character.
How would you describe Martin?
What do you like/dislike about Martin?

Encourage discussion of other characters: Shenene, Gina, Cole, Pam, Tommy

What are you thoughts about *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*?
Encourage discussion about Will's character. How would you describe Will?

What do you like/dislike about Will?
Encourage discussion other characters: Carlton, Hillary, Butler, Parents

Do you see these characters as positive/negative portrayals of Black people? Why do you think as you do? Encourage explanations.

Do you believe there are racial stereotypes on television?
If so, what are they? Who is being stereotyped? How do you feel about these stereotypes?

Do you believe that Black men are stereotyped on television sit-coms? If so, how are they stereotyped? What television sit-coms?

Does anyone remember these characters from television programs?
J.J(*Good Times*)
George(*The Jefferson's*)
ReRun(*What's Happening?*)
Mr. T(*The A-Team*)
Amos & Andy

What do you think about the way these characters portrayed Black men? Positive/Negative?

How much interaction with Black men do each of you have on a daily basis? Class? Dorms? Athletics? Clubs/Organizations? Lunch?

Did you grow up in an integrated neighborhood?
How many Black men did you have at your high school?

How do think Black men are perceived in today's society?

APPENDIX C

PERCEPTION ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Please circle your answer to the following questions.

1. What is your age?
   a. below 18
   b. 18-24
   c. 25-35
   d. 36-45
   e. over 45

2. What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female

3. What is your race?
   a. Black
   b. White
   c. Asian
   d. Other

4. What is your classification?
   a. Freshman
   b. Sophomore
   c. Junior
   d. Senior
   e. Graduate Student

5. Which category would best describe your family's income last year?
   a. Less than $15,000
   b. Between $15,000-$25,000
   c. Between $25,000-$35,000
   d. Between $35,000-$50,000
   e. Over $50,000

6. How many hours per week do you spend watching television?
   a. More than 10 hours.
   b. Between 5 and 10 hours.
   c. Less than 5 hours.
   d. I never watch television

7. What are your top 3 favorite television programs?
   Please List:

_____
_____
_____

8. Who are your top **3** favorite male characters on television programs?
Please List:

_____
_____
_____

9. How many Black males do you consider close friends?
a. Three or more
b. Two
c. One
d. None

10. **Yes or No?**
Does television promote negative stereotypes of people?
Yes_____ No_____

If Yes, which groups of people does television promote negative stereotypes? Check all that apply.
Blacks_____
Whites_____
Hispanics_____
American Indians_____
Asians_____
Other(Please specify)_____

11. How many Black male teachers have you had in your life?
a. Three or more
b. Two
c. One
d. None

12. How often do you watch the following television programs?
Please circle the letter that contains your response.

The Fresh Prince of Bel Air (Monday, 8pm, WBIR-Channel 10)
a. Always.
b. Almost always.
c. Sometimes.
d. Never.

Martin (Sunday, 8pm, WKCH-Channel 43)
a. Always.
b. Almost always.
c. Sometimes.
d. Never

13. How do you view the following characters from the following

programs?
Please rate on the scale from 0 to 5.

a. 'Will' from *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*

0 **1-------2--------3--------4--------5**

Don't Know Very Negative Very Positive

b. 'Martin' from *Martin*

0 **1-------2--------3--------4--------5**

Don't Know Very Negative Very Positive

APPENDIX D

PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE
BEFORE *THE FRESH PRINCE OF BEL AIR*

1. Approximately how many episodes of *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* have you watched?
   a. One
   b. Two
   c. Three to Ten
   d. Ten or More
   e. Zero

   If you answered E, do not continue.
   If you answered A,B,C, or D to Question #1, continue.

2. I believe Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

3. I watch *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* because I like Will's character.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

4. I watch *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* because I can relate to the plots of the stories.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE
AFTER *THE FRESH PRINCE OF BEL AIR*

1. I believe Will's character is a positive reflection of Black men.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

2. I believe *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* promotes positive images of Black men.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

3. I know Black men who have characteristics similar to Will's character.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

4. The plot to this episode of *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* was similar to a situation that happened in my life.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE
BEFORE *MARTIN*

1. Approximately how many episodes of *Martin* have you watched?
   a. One
   b. Two
   c. Three to Ten
   d. Ten or More
   e. Zero

   If you answered E, do not continue.
   If you answered A,B,C, or D to Question #1, continue.

2. I believe Martin's character is a positive reflection of Black men.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

3. I watch *Martin* because I like Martin's character.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

4. I watch *Martin* because I can relate to the plots of the stories.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE
AFTER *MARTIN*

1. I believe Martin's character is a positive reflection of Black men.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

2. I believe *Martin* promotes positive images of Black men.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

3. I know Black men who have characteristics similar to Martin's character.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

4. The plot to this episode of *Martin* was similar to a situation that happened in my life.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. No Opinion
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX E

DISCUSSION VIDEO

Group A

In general, what do you think about these two programs, *The Fresh Prince & Martin*?

"Stereotypical, realistic, but the characteristics are exaggerated. I watch them for their entertainment value."

What do you think about Martin's character?

"I do not like his attitude towards things. His character is greatly exaggerated."

"He's rude, disgusting. I like the show, but I don't like Martin.

"Martin's character is so exaggerated that you lose focus of the show."

"Martin has a 'I don't care attitude', just like people in today's society, He just walks all over people and nobody really cares."

"He's just like George on *The Jefferson's*."

"His character is just silly."

"The show perpetuates a lot of stereotypes. I had to stop watching it for a while because I thought it was too much regression back to the television shows in the past. We(Blacks) see it as entertainment, but others(Non-Blacks) don't."

What stereotypes do you see in Martin?

"Martin is all about sex. Sex by any means necessary. It's all about him. I like Martin and what I think is positive about him is his extended network of friends. He has friends but still stands up for himself and is his own man."

"He's always on a power trip and don't like to listen to anyone else."

"His character is over exaggerated, he's rude, vulgar. I can see some realism in his character, however. "

What do you like and/or dislike about Martin?

"I have never seen a guy so much in love...they overdo this part of him. It's not realistic."

"I don't like the way Martin's character is so exaggerated."

"I like the male and female interaction on the show. How both sexes view things."

"I like the way Martin is a strong person, he's willing to try, he has confidence."

"I also like Martin's positive attitude and how he has confidence and believes in himself. We(Blacks) need more people like that in the world. Martin has a major obstacle that many Black men go through and this is having success and not wanting to lose it. I like the fact that his has friends and love his mom."

"Martin says things that I don't think children watching the program should hear."

"I don't like the way Martin disrespects Pam as a Black female. That bothers me."

Is there a counter balance in Martin's character?

"Pam does not take Martin's disrespectfullness towards her. She dishes it out back to Martin every time he bothers her."

"Yes, Pam does give it back to him, however, she(Pam) is portrayed as being not as swift as Martin in dishing it back out. She can't think of stuff to say back as fast as Martin can."

How does Pam relate to Martin?

"They like each other, yet they have a weird way of showing it. It depends on the way you look at it. In a sense they are just 'checking' each other, telling jokes, cracking on one another."

"Pam takes Martin's cracks like she can give it right back to him."

"Is it OK to do this, though?

"Martin talks to everyone on the show the same way.'

What do you think about Sheneneh's character?

"She is voicetrous, she wants to be in the limelight, she has to be extravagant."

"She wants what Gina and Martin have, and that's love. I think she's a little jealous of that."

"I think she is a reality check for Gina and Martin. In this episode and in the others she always gives Gina or whoever something to think about when she leaves. The other characters have to think."

"You can find a Shenene on every block.."

"She's a combination of every person that you have ever known."

"She is the type of person everybody needs.. She knows everything about everybody, and you know that what she says she is telling the truth."

"The way she presents her message is so funny. She has a unique way of saying it."

What do you think about Tommy's character?

"Tommy is wise. He gets Martin to see the real issue."

"He plays the devil's advocate."

"He's hardworking, educated man, and a very high role model."

"He's Martin's alter-ego. He want Martin to see his point of view."

What is your overall impression of *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*?

"Hillary acts like somebody from Bel Air. Will is a stereotype of somebody not from Bel Air. The show is a stereotype of how white people are in Bel Air. I don't like Hillary or Carlton."

"Will is a Philadelphian and is very exaggerated. There's no happy medium in television for Black people. I did not like the Cosby show. I hated it. I could not relate to it. I could relate to Good Times with them talking about Kool-Aid and stuff, I could identify with it. There are kids now who can identify with Hillary. We(Blacks) have to be one extreme or the other."

"I don't like the butler. He always says, 'Master.' I don't like it, it plays out with me. It's like those old Shirley Temple movies when all the Black people played role like cooks in the kitchen and janitors, and it is still happening in the 90s.'

"I can identify with the family and with the whole setting in general Just because they are successful, a judge and a professor. They came from hard times and made it.

"There need to be a medium, television has got to find it. You've got The Fresh Prince of Bel Air and Good Times. There's not a show with it.

"Both shows provide an 'escape.' See how crazy Martin is and Gina.

"By us being in college we can distinguish 'entertainment from reality.' But what about those who don't go to college. These people are more impressionable. People don't know the power of the television and movies like Menace to Society. There are major stereotypes with the Fresh Prince.

"I think that the Fresh Prince is a joke. I don't see the children being the way they are with all the past things that their parents have gone through. Its too far out there.

"I believe that if the parents grew up like they say they have, they would have gone to a Black school and have instilled Black history in their children. The show is so far to the

left. The show identifies with White Bourgeoisie America in Bel Air. If Hillary has to struggle for something, she doesn't want it. And Carlton doesn't know any better.

"Hillary and Carlton. I can identify with their parents. They would not grow up

"You go to the white schools, but you ain't white. Carlton said " I don't know how to beg, I'm rich."

"When I was growing up I got everything I wanted, but I got it because I deserved it. I worked for it.

"These children don't have any sense of independence and no limits. All the money in the world won't help them because they don't have independence. They would not make it on their own.

How would you in general describe Will's character?

"Good natured, hardworking, he plays around too much. Deep down he knows he wants a better life. He is positive."

"But he's always talking to women like 'Hey baby, hey baby' It's not positive for him to do that.

"But its real. All guys do it. Will is just joking around when he does it."

"Is that a positive image though?"

"It just a phase in his life. It's neither positive or negative."

"I believe that Will is a positive character. He's living the American dream.. He wants to a strong Black man and maintain his ethnicity and Black pride and cultural tradition. When they(the rest of the family) fall out of balance, he puts them back.

Are you pleased with Will's interpretation?

"When you have so few positive interpretations, you've got to like him, there's no moderation."

"The show has gotten good ratings so it must be doing something right."

What do you think about Carlton's character?

"Carlton is the Uncle Tom of the show. He's spoiled, arrogant and a negative image of African American people. African Americans would see him as negative, he always wants his way."

"He's not a very strong character, he's Carlton until he gets in trouble, and he uses Will to get ahead. It's a power struggle between Carlton and Will. Carlton always looks down on Will because Will doesn't have any money."

"Carlton's never been to Philadelphia. He can give you facts and figures about African Americas, but have not experienced being Black. He doesn't want to give up Bourgeoisie and does not really know what Black History is all about. His parents are at fault because they do not raise him in this environment. How can white parents adopt Black children? It's very difficult because of this issue."

What do you think about Hillary's character?

"I like Hillary because she looks good."

"She's like Christy of Three's Company, those blond stereotypes."

"Will would survive if their parents were killed or something happened to them. Carlton and Hillary would not."

"Carlton has business skills. All you need to know to make in this country is how to make money. He'll make it in corporate America. Hillary would make it. They've never had to be independent."

"Carlton will sell out in a heartbeat. Carlton will forget his Blackness. He's a strong character because he knows money talks. He puts more value on the worth of people."

What do you think about the parents on the show?

"Nonchalant, not a real character in the show. The other mother was more active in the plots and stronger and more positive."

"Their parents have lost something on their road to making it."

"In the beginning, when the show first come on the air it seemed more grounded, but now it's all funny, everything is more funny, it doesn't matter."

"How many Black people do we know that play these roles?"

"There is no reason for any of these kids to be the way they are. They feel like they have to assimilate to the mainstream culture."

"I have seen people like this before."

"The Black people I have seen in Memphis who are like this family, nice houses, very stable financially, nice communities are very down to earth.. They got money, but they are normal, they do normal things, you can relate to them. Just one community of Black people, with real big houses. I've been exposed to a lot of Black people with a lot of money and I have not seen anybody resemble character like the one's on *The Fresh Prince*."

"I have seen it, but not to the degree as in *The Fresh Prince*."

"You can't blame it on the money, a lot of people who don't have money act the same way."

"A lot of people I have seen with a lot of money try act Black. He what's up man?"

"the environment they are in has a lot to do with it. Hillary would not act like that at TSU or some place like that a Black College, where there is a lot of Black people. It would only take her a couple of times to learn that."

Do you see these characters as positive or negative?

"In general, negative, with positive aspects."

"I've overheard someone talking about *The Fresh Prince* show and they said, 'That's why Black people don't need money.' This was a comment made about the show, why did they say that? Is that what they see in the characters?"

"Negative, very stereotypical."

"Ditto"

"Negative, but needed. We've come out of the projects with *Good Times*, but not all of us made it to Bel Air. I believe that *Roc* is more balanced in the way they present the show."

"Negative, but at least we have some Black shows."

"Negative"

"In some of the characters, you can find something. Will is a more personable person. For each character you can see some positive."

Are there racial stereotypes on television?

"Black men are stereotyped as being a gansta, from the ghetto. Black females are whores. And news programs make us look bad."

"Black men are shown as uncommitted to their families. Indians, Hispanics, Italians. Black females are always place in subservient roles, we are still serving whites."

"Its like covert racism. We are placed in these roles, it subtle."

"Asians are seen as having slanted eyes, Chinese and Japanese too. That's a pet peeve of mine."

"There are people that always knock rap music, but most of all the commercials on television use rap as a way to sell their products."

"Black children are portrayed as not having a chance to make it for any reason."

DISCUSSION VIDEO

Group B

In general, what are your thoughts about *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*?

"It was entertaining, depending on what point of view you look at."

"*Martin* was more negative. It surprised me at first compared to *The Fresh Prince*."

"I felt as though *The Fresh Prince* was down to earth, it kept me engaged, it was interesting, easy to relate to the plots"

"I did not like Martin because of the way he treats women."

"I did not find Martin's character insulting, because I have watched the show a number of times and I know him pretty well. The things he did were pretty insulting. I found it entertaining."

"I cannot relate to *The Fresh Prince*. I can relate to the male and female relationships on *Martin*. I can relate more to it. I can see it from Gina's point of view."

"Martin and The Fresh Prince are pretty goofy and silly. Those are some negative traits about them. There are good aspects to the shows, for example the Fresh Prince has a job and is going to college, etc."

"Martin wasn't entertaining or funny to me. *The Fresh Prince* was entertaining. It is a typical sitcom formula show. It was not necessarily realistic, but it was entertaining. I see Martin as a realistic character. I have seen people like Martin before."

How would you describe Martin's character?

"He let's his friends influence him in making decisions."

"He is easy to relate to in terms of accuracy. I think Will is an accurate character in terms of the language used. I can identify with him, the repore he has with his friends is something Black people can relate to. The images that come across. It is an accurate portrayal based on what I have experienced."

"I thought he was funny, obnoxious, rude, he does not beat around the bush, he's straightforward and honest, he seems to take the wrong path, but he's funny. I don't know if I'd like to hang around somebody like that all the time, he would get on my nerves."

"I believe that Will has a great sense of humor, his repore with his family and his personality. He's an outgoing person, however everything gets exaggerated to bring the comedic effect, but I don't think some of those things would happen in real life."

"Martin makes him uncomfortable because it reminds me of someone asking me for money on the street and I can't get rid of them."

"He's very popular and rich."

"Martin is obnoxious and treats women very badly, however, I did find myself laughing."

"It is glaring obvious that *Martin* is full of ethnic humor, in terms of its usage of language and mannerisms. Most white audiences who do not come in contact with Black people on a regular basis or have a lot of Black friends may not be able to relate to it and what's being said. However, this is the price Black shows have to pay in order to make Blacks laugh, it still perpetuate the stereotypes."

"Some things don't offend me about *Martin*, but I don't know about other things, if I sat down and really thought about it when in the program, Martin alludes to whites as 'The man,' that may offend me if I really thought about it."

"I still would not like Martin if he was Black or White, it would not matter."

"The show is a partial victory. The show wins because it get good ratings, but it loses with the stereotypes. Some of them are offensive and tasteless. And at the end of this episode of Martin, as a man, it was insulting to watch it. That was no way to propose to a women."

"I've never seen *Martin* before today, I think it's popular because of the other characters."

What do you think about Sheneneh's character?

"I don't like her."

"I believe it is a stereotype of Black women."

"It is a stereotype of Black women to the nth degree."

"In *Martin,* the way the show portrays Black people makes me think that the characters are uneducated. It's the image I see portrayed. I know intelligent Black people. And I would be offended if I were Black to hear myself talking like that."

"I see Gina as being intelligent, she has a real good job and does very well for herself."

"I wasn't impressed by her. The way she speaks. The way she says 'Mar - in'."

"Everything they say on the show is a wise crack of some sorts.."

Is Gina a counterbalance to Martin?

"They did not use good diction or grammar, but how do we talk around our friends?"

"Well, I don't talk like that around my friends."

"That one episode does not show the whole true character of Gina. She was very emotional at the time she called out Martin's name."

"I thought she sounded intelligent in each scene. I each situation she spoke according to how she felt."

"I don't see nothing wrong with having friends over and kicking it. But I can't understand why there isn't a time where they can sit around and have an intelligent discussion."

"I grew up in an all Black neighborhood and when Black people would sit around and talk intelligently about something, there would always be another Black person to come up and say that the Blacks were 'talking white.' That bothers me. It's so stupid to say that. If Martin was speaking intelligently or properly, the show would not have the appeal that it has."

What do you think about Sheneneh's character?

"Shenene is an exaggerated version of a typical inner city, low income Black female, that the stereotype they are attempting to portray. Most of us have seen someone with some or similar qualities of this character as so far as her appearance, clothing nails, etc."

What do you think about Tommy's character?

"I like him because he is level-headed. Tommy calms people down and tells them to think about what the real issue is, to think rationally."

"Tommy is more of an adult. He's got his head on right, he has humor, not as deeply exaggerated as Martin, he's more down to earth."

"He's a strong character, a man."

"He's very likable and down to earth."

What do you think about Pam's character?

"She's loud."

"She's down to earth. Martin is loud too, trying handling everyone's business."

"Pam is a good friend."

"Pam is very attractive, plays the best friend role very well, means well. The exchange between her and Martin add spice to the show."

"Pam is the female Martin. She can be obnoxious too."

"Pam is the typical good friend. In this episode, though, it seemed as if she was encouraging Gina to leave. She may in a way like Martin and is trying to push Gina out. A lot of girls are like that."

What do you think about Will's character on *The Fresh Prince*?

"I don't believe that he has much respect for Black women."

I know somebody just like that, they are very funny, but very immature, very disrespectful. He's a nice guy, though."

"I excuse a lot of his behavior because he is a kid, you don't see this kind of behavior in adults."

"Raging hormones."

"His exaggerated mannerisms and antics make him one of the most negative characters I have seen on television. He reminds me of the buffoonery of the things we have been trying to get away from. This show ended on a positive note. The manner in which he (Will) went back to his old job because of family or money. They show him going back for the money. This ending buried the positive overtone that they were trying to create."

"I thought he was funny. I see him as a positive character. If the money had not been an issue I think he probably would have gone back to the old job. Will is an intelligent character, but he keeps it hidden. Will knows, he's aware of what's going on."

"I think that its more about the money, it's negative because it make Will appear to be prostituting himself, he came out of a good situation because of the money."

'"I just saw it as a lighter note at the end."

"Their(Will and Carlton's) relationship is always back and forth with Carlton. Will just wanted Carlton to beg for him to come back to the old job."

"If the story would have ended with Will saying, "I'll come back, the money doesn't matter," It would have achieved the effect that they(producers) were looking for. It would have been clear."

"He left because he was treated bad by Carlton and Carlton never came back to apologize. I did not see it as a negative ending because it was a comedy show."

What do you think about Carlton's character?

"Everybody's so proper and upper class in this show. They make Carlton as white as possible, the way he talks, the way he dresses, the way he dances. He's the stereotype of a white man."

"I see the show a typical kind of family relationship where they go at it, but they still come together. Speaking of the portrayal of Black men, I think that Carlton is a big contrast to Will and Martin."

"I don't think Carlton's very realistic. I've never met any one person act like that, Black or White."

"I found Carlton's character insulting and offensive. It says to Black people that if you want to be successful, you've got to be like Carlton. There's no happy medium, no in between. You can't have both."

"I don't believe that Carlton's a realistic character, if he was not there it would be hard, because he is needed to play off Will for comedic effect."

What do you think about Hillary's character?

"She's my favorite one on the show because she is good looking."

Do you believe that the characters on *Martin* are portrayed as positive or negative?

"I see them as positive because they are all educated, they have good futures, and they have relationships. The negative part is that they act goofy, but they are comedy shows."

"You can't have it both ways, they are successful. I see Martin as positive because it has a balance of hipness and people having careers. I see it as more neutral than negative or positive. You can be yourself and be successful. I don't think you should model yourself after Martin."

"I still think that Martin treats women badly. I like Tommy."

" I see Martin as more negative than positive."

"I see them as both positive because back in 1964 we were maids and butlers. You never dreamed of seeing Black people with money or jobs or television. The were always saying 'yes sir' and 'no sir.'"

"In a general sense, I see these characters as positive, but I have to because of the stereotypes."

If these are the first steps in getting pioneer programming on television with Black characters, would you give me the same answer to this positive or negative question if it were 30 years from now?

"I would say that it was negative."

"Neither."

"I see this programming as negative because these Black characters have no interaction with Whites."

"It's the same way for White shows, such as Cheers."

"I see these show as more positive than shows from the past. I'm surprised that Black people would see these shows as positive."

What are some of the stereotypes you see in general?

"The chauvinistic Black male."

"Martin is obnoxious, rude, crude, the ultimate stereotype. If it were a drama it would be a problem. The stereotypes are there because it is a comedy."

"I see immaturity. The avoidance of commitment of the Black man. No intelligence or being smart. You always see the ethnicity of mannerisms or language. And with Carlton's character, he is intelligent, but it's slanted with him no having any Blackness."

"Stan(from *Martin*) is a stereotypical character."

"I still don't like Martin because of the way he treats women. Is he that way all of the time?

"No not all the time. He's committed to Gina."

"I switched off early on because of Martin's attitude toward women."

"Why did you get pissed off?"

"Both of these shows have Black writers and producers."

DISCUSSION VIDEO

Group C

In general, what did you think about these programs?

"I did not care for them much"

"They were entertaining and fun to watch."

What did you think about the character of Martin?

"Martin is an exaggeration of Black males. His actions, the way he talks and stuff, it was something we can laugh at."

"Martin was an exaggeration, he did not rely on himself, he did not have a strong personality. Tommy was the one who gave him analytical advise."

"Cole plays the same type of role, but he's not very realistic."

"Cole is the epitome of what those say about Black men."

"Martin is sort of immature, irresponsible."

"I did not see him as portrayed as positive."

"Martin is the portrayal of an irresponsible male, whatever race, such as Ted Dansen on Cheers."

What did you dislike about Martin?

"Too unrealistic, playing the fool, an idiot, the way he dealt with the challenges of his life."

"He's a little boy in a man's body."

"Martin plays off Gina."

"His character shows reality, decision making."

What do you think about Sheneneh's character?

"She/he is funny, it did not fit in the show."

"I have never seen it, it was incongruous, very funny."

"It is falsifying the image of Black women. I've never met a Black women that acted like that."

"She is a stereotype of the Black home girl, with no mind, you can't understand most of what she says, whether it be slang or pronunciation or whatever."

What do you think about Tommy's character?

"He's a much more realistic."

"Tommy is the good angel on Martin's shoulders, Cole is the devil."

"Tommy is big and strong."

"He's a mature person."

"In parts of the show he plays the role as being just one of the guys, but he's the one who gets to the real issue, he's a sensible person."

What do you think about Cole's character?

"He's a immature guy."

"Martin connects with him the most."

"He's immature."

What did you think about Pam's character?

"Tommy and her are a lot alike."

"Pam is Gina's Tommy and Cole put together."

"Both of the women characters were real characters. Both of the men besides Tommy were stereotypes."

"Pam is a typical friend character."

"Pam is Gina's best friend, the kind that will give her opinion."

What did you think about Will's character on *The Fresh Prince*?

"The show starts out a stupid, but makes a good point at the end."

"Will is in school and has a job."

"Will in not like Martin. You can relate with Will more, his a more typical kind of guy."

"Its overwritten with comments made to women. This shows that it is appropriate to make those comments to women."

"I am disturbed by all the negative stereotypes especially those of Black males on television. I don't know any Black males who speak like that."

"The show gets its point across with humor."

"The way Will acts is funny, that's really not how real life operates. It's just there to be funny. If Will would act like that around women in real life he would probably get smacked or something."

"Will is an engaging, likable character. He's bigger than life, I find him entertaining, but he's too exaggerated."

"Will seems to vocalize to the women what my friends would just be thinking to say."

Whose character do you perceive as more realistic, Martin or Will?

"Will."

"Almost the same."

"Will is more thoughtful."

What don't you like about Will?

"Nothing's wrong with Will."

"The show is funny."

"There are parts of his character that are obnoxious, and others that are decent."

"What concerns me is what we teach our children. I used to teach at an all Black school and I see these behaviors, being negative towards women, and they don't need to be reinforced by television. It's a funny exaggeration. There are television shows that exaggerate White males. There is a concern in today's society about Black males, but most television show Black males like this."

"I don't like the sexual innuendoes, there are so much of the all the time. They are so distracting it overwhelms the good stuff."

"This episode worsens, it get more annoying."

What do you think about the parents?

"They are concerned parents, but not intrusive on their kids' lives."

"They are the guiding force. They are happy for Carlton."

"He(father) is a typical parent figure the everyone wants to have. A good parent."

"He plays the good father role."

"They have come to terms with the way their children are and they are there for support for their children."

What did you think about Carlton's character?

"Carlton is an uppity nerd. He is a stereotype."

"I think he's that characterization that has come about lately of Black people trying to be white. He's opposite of a guy that grew up on the streets."

"He's an uppity nerd and a stereotype."

"He's exaggerated."

"Carlton is there completely for comedic reasons, he's too straight."

"He just wants to be perfect."

"I have a hard time classifying him."

"He portrays the rich negatively."

"I don't think that he takes anything away from the show."

"Between him and Michael Fox I don't see any difference."

"I see people on Oprah talking about this issue of how to embrace you culture and not to be like the White upper class America. These are negative stereotypes of some Black people."

"I went to high school with White guys who wanted to be Black."

"To me I see this family as not trying to be White. These kids have just been raised with money and privileges. They are no different than from rich White kids. These parents maybe trying to fill the role of White people. These kids were just raised rich."

"I don't see them as negative or positive."

What did you think about Hillary's character?

"She plays the fool."

"She plays the fool, the most unrealistic character on the show."

"Very over exaggerated character."

"I think that there are a lot of people who are like that, that they have been raised that way. I think that it is a very realistic stereotype of her."

"Exaggerated."

"She's like girls raised that way on other shows, the valley girl type."

What did you think about Jeffrey the butler's character?

"I don't see any kind of statement being made with the butler's character."

"Very insignificant character."

"Very insignificant character."

"He's an observer of the family, he gives explanation or clarification of something."

"He has a different type of humor, it's sarcastic."

Do you think there are racial stereotypes on television?

"Yes."

What are the most prominent stereotypes you've seen on television?

"The hip Black man."

"The hip Black man."

"I don't see it as positive or negative."

"It depends on whoever it is targeted toward."

Are Black men stereotyped on television situation comedies? What are the shows?

"*In Living Color*."

"*Living Single*."

"*The Sinbad show*."

What did you think about JJ on *Good Times*?

"A fool character."

"An over exaggeration."

"I am not familiar with the show."

What about George Jefferson?

"He's an overbearing and racist character."

"He was Archie Bunker's neighbor, a foil for Archie."

What did you think about *What's Happening*?(The television show and character of ReRun)

"He was there for comedic effect purposes like Abbot and Costello."

"It had some good points."

"I am not familiar with the show."

"It was a straight comedy show."

APPENDIX F

WRAP-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

1.
Read through the following list of words and select those which seem to you to characterize Will(from *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air)* and Martin (from *Martin*). Write as many of these words in the space provided as you think are necessary to characterize these people adequately.

aggressive	alert	ambitious
arrogant	argumentative	artistic
boastful	brilliant	conceited
conservative	conventional	courteous
cowardly	cruel	deceitful
efficient	extremely nationalistic	evasive
faithful	frivolous	generous
gluttonous	grasping	gregarious
happy-go-lucky	honest	humorous
imaginative	imitative	impulsive
individualistic	industrious	intelligent
ignorant	jovial	kind
lazy	loud	loyal to family ties
materialistic	meditative	mercenary
methodical	musical	naive
neat	ostentatious(showy)	passionate
persistent	physically dirty	pleasure-loving
ponderous	practical	progressive
pugnacious	quarrelsome	quiet
quick-tempered	radical	reserved
revengeful	rude	scientifically minded
sensitive	sensual	shrewd
slovenly	sophisticated	sportsmanlike
straightforward	stolid	stubborn
stupid	suave	suggestible
superstitious	suspicious	talkative
tradition loving	treacherous	unreliable
very religious	witty	

other descriptors_____

_____

_____

_____

'Will' from *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*

_____

_____

_____

'Martin' from *Martin*

2. How do you feel about interacting with people of another race?

3. Do you believe there are racial stereotypes on television? If so, how do you feel about these racial stereotypes?

4. What did you like most about Will's character?

5. What did you dislike about Will's character?

6. What did you like most Martin's character?

7. What did you dislike about Martin's character?

8. Do you believe Black men are stereotyped on television situation comedies?
Yes____ No____

If you answered Yes or No, please explain why you feel this way.

APPENDIX G

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS' FAVORITE TELEVISION SHOWS

Race						Sex		
Blacks			Whites					
BF	BM	Total Blacks	WF	WM	Total Whites	Females	Males	Total People
Living Single(3)	Martin(3)	Martin(6)	Seinfeld(3)	Married with Children(2)	Seinfeld(5)	Seinfeld(3)	Martin(3)	Martin(6)
Martin(3)	Living Single(2)	Living Single(5)	Frasier(2)	Seinfeld(2)	Married with Children(2)	Living Single(3)	Living Single(2)	Seinfeld(5)
90210(3)	CNN(2)	90210(3)	Sisters(2)	Fresh Prince(2)	Fresh Prince(2)	Martin(3)	CNN(2)	Living Single(5)
Seinfeld(2)	Young & Restless	Seinfeld(2)	Laroquette	Cheers	Sisters(2)	90210(4)	Married with Children(2)	90210(4)
Eye to Eye	Local News	CNN(2)	Mad About You	Mad About You	Frasier(2)	Frasier(2)	Seinfeld(2)	Married with Children(2)
Melrose Place	Arsenio Hall	Melrose Place	90210	Laroquette	Mad About You(2)	Sisters(2)	Fresh Prince(2)	CNN(2)
Murphy Brown	Beavis & Butthead	Murphy Brown	NYPD Blue	Murphy Brown	Laroquette (2)	Murphy Brown(2)	Cheers	Frasier(2)
News Magazine Shows	Bionic Woman	News Magazine Shows	Grace Under Fire	Growing Pains	Murphy Brown(2)	Melrose Place(2)	Mad About You	Sisters(2)
Dr. Quinn	Good Times	Dr. Quinn	Melrose Place	General Hospital	NYPD Blue	News Magazine Shows	Laroquette	Murphy Brown(2)
X-Files	Headline News	X-Files	Young & Restless	Sat Night Live	Grace Under Fire	Dr. Quinn	Murphy Brown	Melrose Place(2)
	TV Nite Flight	Arsenio Hall	CBS This Morning	MTV Alternative Nation	Melrose Place	X-Files	Growing Pains	Fresh Prince(2)
	Simpsons	Beavis & Butthead	Star Trek		Young & Restless	Laroquette	General Hospital	Laroquette (2)
		Bionic Woman	Home Improvement		CBS This Morning	Mad About You	Sat Night Live	Mad About You(2)
		Good Times	Murphy Brown		Star Trek	NYPD Blue	MTV Alternative Nation	News Magazine Shows
		Headline News			Home Improvement	Grace Under Fire	Young & Restless	Dr. Quinn
		TV Nite Flight			Growing Pains	Eye to Eye	Local News	X-Files
		Simpsons			General Hospital	Young & Restless	Arsenio Hall	Growing Pains
					Sat Night Live	CBS This Morning	Beavis & Butthead	General Hospital
					MTV Alternative Nation	Star Trek	Bionic Woman	Sat Night Live
						Home Improvement	Good Times	MTV Alternative Nation

APPENDIX H

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS' FAVORITE MALE TELEVISION CHARACTERS

Race						Sex		
Blacks			Whites					
BF	BM	Total Blacks	WF	WM	Total Whites	Females	Males	Total People
Martin(3)	Martin(3)	Martin(6)	Jerry Seinfeld(3)	Kramer (Seinfeld) (2)	Jerry Seinfeld(4)	Jerry Seinfeld(5)	Martin(4)	Martin(7)
Will Smith(2)	Roc(2)	Will Smith(2)	Joel Fleisman (Northern Exposure)	Will Smith (2)	Kramer (Seinfeld) (3)	Martin(3)	Roc(2)	Seinfeld(6)
Jerry Seinfeld(2)	Bryant Gumbal	Jerry Seinfeld(2)	Fox Maulder	George (Seinfeld)	Will Smith (2)	Will Smith(2)	Kramer (Seinfeld) (2)	Will Smith(4)
Neal (Young & Restless)	Arsenio Hall	Roc(2)	Cole (Young & Restless)	Jerry (Seinfeld)	John Laroquette (2)	Neal (Young & Restless)	Will Smith (2)	Kramer (Seinfeld) (3)
Tommy (Martin)	Chevy Chase	Neal (Young & Restless)	Capt. Pickard	John Laroquette	Dr. Frasier Cane(2)	Tommy (Martin)	Al Bundy(2)	Al Bundy(2)
Overton (Living Single)	Al Bundy	Tommy (Martin)	Tim the Toolman	Mike Seaver	George (Seinfeld) (2)	Overton (Living Single)	Bryant Gumbal	George (Seinfeld) (2)
Brandon (90210)	Bill Cosby	Overton (Living Single)	Eldin Burnikee	Woody (Cheers)	Joel Fleisman	Brandon (90210)	Arsenio Hall	John Laroquette (2)
Billy (Melrose Place)	Dick Vitale	Brandon (90210)	Dr. Frasier Cane	Dillon (90210)	Fox Maulder	Billy (Melrose Place)	Chevy Chase	Dr. Frasier Cane(2)
Erkel	Mike Tyson	Billy (Melrose Place)	Jim Dial	Dr. Frasier Cane	Cole (Young & Restless)	Erkel	Bill Cosby	Neal (Young & Restless)
Sinbad	Homer Simpson	Erkel	Paul Reiser (Mad About You)	Bart Simpson	Capt. Pickard	Sinbad	Dick Vitale	Tommy (Martin)
	John Hinton	Sinbad	Kramer (Seinfeld)	Harry (Empty Nest)	Tim the Toolman	Joel Fleisman	Mike Tyson	Overton (Living Single)
	Jack Abbot	Bryant Gumbal	John Laroquette	Martin	Eldin Burnikee	Fox Maulder	Homer Simpson	Brandon (90210)
		Arsenio Hall	George (Seinfeld)	Al Bundy	John Kelly	Cole (Young & Restless)	John Hinton	Billy (Melrose Place)
		Chevy Chase	Michael (Melrose Place)		Paul Reiser (Mad About You)	Capt. Pickard	Jack Abbot	
		Al Bundy	John Kelly		John Laroquette	Tim the Toolman	George (Seinfeld)	Sinbad
		Bill Cosby			Mike Seaver	Eldin Burnikee	Jerry (Seinfeld)	Joel Fleisman (Northern Exposure)
		Dick Vitale			Woody (Cheers)	Dr. Frasier Cane	John Laroquette	Fox Maulder

Race						Sex		
Blacks			Whites					
BF	BM	Total Blacks	WF	WM	Total Whites	Females	Males	Total People
		Homer Simpson			Bart Simpson	Paul Reiser (Mad About You)	Woody (Cheers)	Capt. Pickard
		John Hinton			Harry (Empty Nest)	Kramer (Seinfeld)	Dillon (90210)	Tim the Toolman
		Jack Abbot			Martin	John Laroquette	Dr. Frasier Cane	Eldin Burnikee
					Al Bundy	George (Seinfeld)	Bart Simpson	Jim Dial
					Michael (Melrose Place)	Michael (Melrose Place)	Harry (Empty Nest)	Paul Reiser (Mad About You)
					Jim Dial	John Kelly		Michael (Melrose Place)
								John Kelly
								Bryant Gumble
								Arsenio Hall
								Chevy Chase
								Bill Cosby
								Dick Vitale
								Mike Tyson
								Homer Simpson
								John Hinton
								Jack Abbot
								Mike Seaver
								Woody (Cheers)
								Dillon (90210)

APPENDIX I

WORDS PARTICIPANTS' USED TO DESCRIBE WILL AND MARTIN

Race					
Blacks					
BF		**BM**		**Total Blacks**	
Will	**Martin**	**Will**	**Martin**	**Will**	**Martin**
happy-go-lucky(4)	arrogant(5)	talkative(3)	talkative(4)	humorous(7)	talkative(8)
humorous(4)	humorous(5)	humorous(3)	jovial(4)	talkative(6)	arrogant(5)
boastful(3)	boastful(4)	straightforward(3)	aggressive(3)	happy-go-lucky(4)	humorous(5)
talkative(3)	talkative(4)	witty(3)	ostentatious(3)	aggressive(3)	boastful(4)
aggressive(3)	rude(4)	ambitious(3)	witty(3)	loyal to family ties(3)	jovial(4)
loyal to family ties(3)	argumentative(4)			jovial(3)	rude(4)
jovial(3)				ostentatious(3)	argumentative(4)
ostentatious(3)				straightforward(3)	ostentatious(3)
				witty(3)	witty(3)
				ambitious(3)	aggressive(4)
				boastful(3)	
Whites					
WF		**WM**		**Total Whites**	
Will	**Martin**	**Will**	**Martin**	**Will**	**Martin**
humorous(6)	loud(3)	ostentatious(5)	talkative(4)	humorous(10)	loud(6)
happy-go-lucky(5)	arrogant(3)	talkative(5)	loud(3)	ostentatious(9)	boastful(5)
witty(5)	pleasure-loving(3)	humorous(4)	ostentatious(3)	jovial(8)	talkative(4)
intelligent(4)	unreliable(3)	boastful(4)	witty(3)	happy-go-lucky(5)	arrogant(3)
pleasure-loving(4)	stupid(2)	jovial(4)	boastful(3)	witty(5)	pleasure-loving(3)
jovial(4)	argumentative(2)		aggressive(3)	talkative(5)	unreliable(3)
ostentatious(4)	boastful(2)			intelligent(4)	ostentatious(3)
				pleasure-loving(4)	witty(3)
				boastful(4)	aggressive(3)
					stupid(2)
					argumentative(2)
Sex					
Females		**Males**		**Total Whites**	
Will	**Martin**	**Will**	**Martin**	**Will**	**Martin**
humorous(10)	arrogant(8)	talkative(8)	talkative(8)	humorous(17)	talkative(12)
happy-go-lucky(9)	humorous(5)	humorous(7)	aggressive(6)	ostentatious(12)	boastful(9)
ostentatious(7)	boastful(6)	witty(7)	ostentatious(6)	jovial(11)	arrogant(8)
jovial(7)	argumentative(6)	ostentatious(5)	witty(6)	talkative(11)	loud(6)
intelligent(4)	talkative(4)	boastful(4)	jovial(4)	happy-go-lucky(9)	ostentatious(6)
pleasure-loving(4)	rude(4)	jovial(4)	boastful(4)	witty(8)	witty(6)
boastful(3)	loud(3)	straightful(3)	loud(3)	boastful(7)	aggressive(6)
talktative(3)	unreliable(3)	ambitious(3)		intelligent(4)	argumentative(6)
aggressive(3)	stupid(2)			pleasure-loving(4)	humorous(5)

loyal to famnily ties(3)				loyal to family ties(3)	jovial(4)
				straightforward (3)	rude(4)
				ambitious(3)	pleasure-loving(3)
				aggressive(3)	unreliable(3)
					stupid(2)
Group A		**Group B**		**Group C**	
Will	**Martin**	**Will**	**Martin**	**Will**	**Martin**
humorous(4)	arrogant(5)	happy-go-lucky(7)	talktative(6)	humorous(6)	pleasure-loving(4)
loyal to family ties(4)	rude(5)	jovial(7)	boastful(4)	witty(6)	talktative(4)
talktative(4)	humerous(4)	talktative(7)	pleasure-loving(4)	ostentatious(6)	ostentatious(4)
loyal to family ties(3)	talktative(4)	ostentatious(6)	faithful(3)	jovial(5)	arrogant(3)
kind(3)	aggressive(4)	witty(6)	arguentative(3)	talktative(4)	imitative(3)
persistent(3)	boastflu(3)	humorous(5)	ostenattious(3)	honest(4)	witty(3)
straightforward(3)	argumentative(3)	rude(4)	rude(3)	boastful(3)	unreliable(3)
witty(3)	ostantatious(3)	loud(3)	humorous(3)	happy-go-lucky(3)	aggressive(2)
aggfressive(3)	happy-go-lucky	straightforward(3)	quick-temepred(2)	impulsive(3)	argumentative(2)
sensitive(2)	materialistic	imaginative(2)	alert(2)	loyal to family ties(3)	stubborn(2)
individualistic	sensitive	individualistic(2)	jovial(2)	pleasure-loving(3)	boastful
honest(2)	straightforw	materialistic(2)	quarrelsome(2)	aggressive(2)	cowardly
impulsive(2)	tradition-loving	alert(2)	witty(2)	faithful(2)	imaginative
ambitious(2)	suave	intelligent(2)	ambitious(2)	individualistic(2)	sensitive
boastflu	stubborn	generous(2)	intelligent(2)	materialistic(2)	stupid
arrogant	loyal to family ties	ambitious(2)	stubborn(2)	argumentative(2)	quarrelsome
faithful	evasive	loyal to family ties(2)	ignorant	loud(2)	jovial
quick-tempered	impulsive	industrious	stupid	ambitious(2)	suave
radial	quarrelsome	persistent	gregarious	generous(2)	decetful
sportsmanlike	firvilous	ignorant	evasive	gregarious(2)	conceited
progressive	cruel	suave	frivilous	intelligent(2)	impulsive
loud	honest	shrewd	industrious	efficient	naive
intelligent	cowardly	unreliable		persistent	ambitious
		evasive		sensitive	
		kind		straightforward	

APPENDIX J

RESPONSES TO WRAP-UP QUESTIONNAIRE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS BY GROUP, RACE, AND SEX

How do you feel about interacting with people of another race?

Group A
Black females

I have no problem with it and I learn from others.

I have no problem with interacting with people of other races.

I have been doing this all my life, I have no problem with it.

I think it is necessary to learn from each other's culture.

Black males

I have no problem at all.

It doesn't matter to me as long as they respect me and my feelings and vice versa. It's cool.

I don't have a problem with it. Treat it the same as any other.

No problem.

Group B
Black females

I have nothing against it.

Do not have any problems interacting with another race and it is "a requirement" so to speak in this society.

Black Males

Ok. I choose it so therefore it is a necessity. I would not say that I have a friend of another race, only associates.

It's unavoidable. The interaction is typically good. But there are those occasions when I feel as though I haven't been accorded the respect I'm due.

White females

Don't have a problem with it.

I enjoy it. I enjoy interacting with a variety of people regardless of race or cultural background.

White males

I have no problem with it at all. I enjoy it because their is so much to learn from different cultures and backgrounds of other people.

Group C
White females

Fine.

I have many friends of other races and do not have a problem interacting with them or anyone else. I like to view everyone as being alike.

I have no problem or concerns about interacting with another race. I actually find it very interesting and exciting to learn the different cultures.

I don't even think about race when interacting with people.

White males

Very at ease.

I have no problem with it.

I try to look at people as individuals and not as "color."

Do you believe there are racial stereotypes on television? If so, how do you feel about these racial stereotypes?

Group A
Black females

Yes, negatively.

Yes. I feel that most Black males are put into the position of a ganster role. I feel that Hispanics play roles of inmates and etc.

Yes. They bother me, but being that I am one of those being stereotyped and that I know the differences, I try to point out the right to those who do not know anything except for what they see on t.v.

Yes. I feel it portrays negative images to people who might not see other positive and realistic views of people.

Black males

Yes. I don't like them.

Yes. Many stereotypes remind us of how silly we can be.

Yes. It shows America's ignorance!

Yes. I believe there are going to be stereotypes until the world ends. We as individuals have to take it upon ourselves to do better.

Group B
Black females

Absolutely. These stereotypes continue to perpetuate belief that are often untrue and unfounded. Unfortunately, many people on our society do not interact with other races and rely and believe what they see on television as true and reality.

Yes. Some are realistic, but negative for television. Some are positive and just what television needs.

Black males

Yes. They are to get ratings and the people portraying these characters are glad to get a job.

Yes. There are racial stereotypes on television. I hate the negative stereotypes, but to cross over and remain on television, these negative stereotypes seem to be what sells(i.e.. Nielson Points.)

White females

Yes. I don't like them because they just perpetuate things.

Yes. I think they are negative, but inevitable on television. Television shows have stereotyped different races, religions, genders, etc. for a long time.

White males

All races are usually depicted in some sort of stereotypical manner. I disagree with these stereotypes and feel that they should not be used.

Group C
White females

Most comedy is based on stereotypes. Seeing stereotypes in drama can be annoying.

Yes. But I don't think television as a whole is very stereotypical. It's sole purpose is to entertain and inform. I think it get a bad rap because everyone thinks of it as a baby-sitter for their children.

Yes. I think for a while the "dumb blond" stereotype did a lot of damage to the perception of women. Now, however, black men and to much lesser extent black women, are suffering from the over exaggeration of their stereotypes.

White males

Yes, to an extent that they are humorous, but sometimes they are taken too far.

Yes. I feel they overdo it, but mostly it's for entertainment purposes only.

Yes. There are perhaps not good role models for us to follow. Certainly, not for children.

What did you like most about Will's character?

Group A
Black females

Friendly, outgoing, "in-touch with reality."

His independence and sense of value.

I like Will's strong sense of self-pride and how he keeps his sense of black pride.

His silliness and wit.

Black males

He's funny, he keeps his black pride and he tries to keep the family informed on their race.

His ability to be himself.

Family ties.

He is an individual with morals.

Group B
Black females

He was in college and worked.

In college, working, not into trouble.

Black males

He is down-to-earth, honest, and straightforward.

The humor whether responses or antics.

White females

I liked his kind of open style.

He's lighthearted and funny.

White males

He was funny and was very easy to associate with

Group C
White females

Friendly, likable, charming, witty.

He's a college student who is realistic. He has a job, studies and likes girls, just like every other male I know.

He had some depth to him.

His quick wit.

White males

Wittiness

The way he acts, funny always, knows what's going on.

Ultimately, he was a good person. He was funny.

What did you dislike about Will's character?

Group A
Black females

His lack of seriousness when he really needs to be.

I like Will's character overall.

His immaturity.

I dislike how Will treats women.

Black Males

He tries to be flashy.

I couldn't tell you.

His inability to view situations holistically

Nothing is particular. His character is needed for that show.

Group B
Black females

How he acts towards women in general.

Naive, young behavior(while I know is his character's M.O.), buffoonery.

Black males

He has the same haircut and he is a bit annoying.

The humor was so exaggerated that Will took on a Buffoon-like image.

White females

Too silly and exaggerated,

He's too silly too often. He's funny to watch, but no the type of person to make a good friend or mate.

White males

He acted a little too goofy and did not show his intelligence.

Group C

White females

Sometimes irritating.

Nothing really, sometimes he's a bit overbearing sexually.

Too sexist.

His sexual innuendoes and almost harassing remarks to women.

White Males

Loud sexual innuendoes.

I like everything about him.

A little too obnoxious at first. A buffoon.

What did you like most Martin's character?

Group A
Black females

He is funny in his portrayals.

Funny.

His self-confidence.

Martin's character demonstrates everyday life but over exaggerated.

Black males

He is quite a thriller.

He's wild. He gives me a release from stressful days of schooling.

Humor, firm in making decisions.

Need for others, his friends.

Group B
Black females

Commitment to a relationship.

Employed, decent apartment, friends, not hanging out on the street, and down-to-earth.

Black males

He is honest

His ethnicity, i.e.. language, mannerisms, interactions with others cast menders.

White females

He was sometimes humorous.

Nothing.

White males

I like Martin's humor and straightforward attitude.

Group C
White females

Nothing.

He's funny and sort of realistic.

Nothing

White males

His extremes that he goes to for a joke.

His sense of humor, split personality when alone with Gina or with his friends.

Funny.

What did you dislike about Martin's character?

Group A
Black females

He's very obnoxious, obstinate and narrow-minded. I find him to be entirely too immature for Gina.

Vulgar, not caring about other people's feelings.

His overall 'bad attitude."

I dislike Martin's attitude towards others.

Black males

He is very rude

Sometimes he get too obnoxious and says a lot of negative things to Gina, but he loves and cares for her. He just shows it in some bad ways.

Martin's distorted view of his relationship with Gina.

He is rude!

Group B
Black females

His indecisiveness and how his friends influence him.

Rude, stubborn, chauvinistic.

Black males

He treated Gina bad in this episode.

His ethnicity was so exaggerated.

White females

He was obnoxious and treated women badly.

He spoke unintelligently and was too immature for a man his age.

White males

He can be obnoxious and offensive at times.

Group C
White females

Pretty much everything.

I think he relies on the opinions of his friends too much. That says something about his self-image.

Couldn't stand on his own, very shallow.

He is over stereotyped.

White males

I don't know

Too unrealistic, the show is totally make believe by the way the actors act.

Very irresponsible.

Do you believe Black men are stereotyped on television situation comedies?
Yes____ No____

If you answered Yes or No, please explain why you feel this way.

Group A
Black females

Yes. It's what is played upon, picked at, and exaggerated. The better aspect of Black men are not brought up enough.

Yes. Black men as well as females are portrayed to the extreme on television and movies. Often times we see exaggerated views of both to sell the production or movie.

Yes. They either want to have too much power and control everything, or they are on the streets doing nothing and going no where fast.

Yes. They are over exaggerated realistic situations of Black men in certain situations.

Black males

Yes. Besides, everyone has a perception about other races and the producers in power can only put on what they want to see. Therefore a true depiction of Black men has not yet been created. When it is feasible for more shows that correctly exemplify Black men or any other cultures then it will be done.

Yes. Everyone is going to be stereotyped whether they like it or not. It is the individual's way they deal with it that really counts.

Yes. These directors and producers read the statistics and stereotypes and coupled with their own views to present an image of Blacks!

Yes. In order to obtain and maintain ratings.

Group B

Black females

Yes. If you only see one thing then you don't know anything else.

Yes. In comedy, it seems that it is the stereotype from which the humor is based and that the character or show involving Black males can only be funny no matter what role he is playing.

Black males

Yes because they are just doing what the writer says. A black buffoon is a stereotype to me.

Yes. The happy-go-lucky, "bug eyes', jovial Negro has always been around and today's sitcoms perpetuate that which we are trying to escape.

White females

Yes. The characters are often exaggerated(language, mannerisms).

Yes. It's obnoxious there are stereotypes of Black men and women on television.

White males

Yes. In the shows that we viewed, black men are depicted as goofy, or just very immature. On the other hand, if they didn't act this way it wouldn't be much of a comedy show.

Group C
White females

Yes. I think all men are stereotyped on television situation comedies.

Yes. They are portrayed in a variety of different ways rich, poor, smart, dumb. But as I said before, I think stereotypes on television affect everyone of all races and genders.

Yes. You see the Black men acting the same way, negative towards women and not being responsible.

yes. Black men are portrayed as either very white collar or low blue collar. producers have yet to discover how to portray average Black people, especially in comedy.

White males

No. There are plenty of sitcoms that show Black men as normal Black men, not the "gangster" type male, i.e.. *Cosby Show* and *Designing Women*.

Yes. I believe they are because probably a long time ago ratings went up when they saw a comedy show and to keep the ratings they still want to stereotype.

Yes.. I think people are stereotyped on television. Certainly Black men are, but so are most other types of people.

APPENDIX K

Synopsis of Television Shows

The Fresh Prince of Bel AIr

In this episode, Will is replaced by Carlton as manager of the college snack shop. Carlton and Will struggle for power and control until Will eventually leaves the snack shop. Will finds another job at another local college hang-out snack shop and succeeds in creating an atmosphere of fun and excitement for the customers, while Carlton struggles to find anyone to eat at the his snack shop. Carlton and Will fight with their egos and each other until they ultimately reach an understanding. In the same episode, Hillary struggles to make it as a television weather forecaster.

Martin

This episode is Part 1 of 2 episodes. After Martin and Gina attend a friend's wedding, Gina hints to Martin about their own wedding plans. With advice from Pam and Sheneneh, Gina informs Martin of her job promotion that will move her to New York City. Martin confers with his friends and decides that Gina may not be serious about leaving Detroit and him for the promotion and tries to 'call Gina's bluff.' Gina leaves Martin after he makes a disappointing proposal to her.

VITA

Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, Reginald Murphy received his initial education at Our Lady of Consolation Catholic School and West Charlotte Senior High School. He earned his Bachelor's of Science in history with a minor in communications from Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina in 1992.

His experience in the field includes serving as ASU's Student Government Vice President and producer of the student government's campus video; working as a news reporter, sales and promotions director, programmer, producer, and air personality at ASU's student radio station, WASU-FM; and interning at WEZK-FM before being hired as an account manager at WEZK-FM and WIMZ-FM.