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### The Effects of Media Consumption on Perceptions of Stereotypes in Comedy

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# THE EFFECTS OF MEDIA CONSUMPTION ON PERCEPTIONS OF STEREOTYPES IN COMEDY

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Research about off-color racial humor has had conflicting results, with some studies suggesting that it may be beneficial to intergroup relations, while others indicate that it reinforces negative stereotypes. This study examined the impact of exposure to media on people's responses to off-color racial humor by comparing White and Asian adults' perceptions of racial humor targeting ingroups and outgroups and how long-term media consumption predict these perceptions. I hypothesized that participants would find humor targeting stereotypes about their ingroup equally humorous but less accurate than humor targeting outgroups due to increased real-life exposure and sensitivity towards their own group's behaviors, thoughts, and feelings. However, the relationship between the target race of jokes and participant race did not predict stereotype accuracy or joke enjoyment. Additionally, I expected that people who watched more television would find stereotypes to be more accurate and less offensive due to increased exposure to stereotypes and internalization. For both ingroup and outgroup targets, heavy media viewers rated stereotypes as more accurate but did not report different levels of offensiveness compared to light media viewers. This outcome suggests that heavy viewers recognize the offensiveness of stereotypes in humor yet still internalize them. Findings highlight a need going forward for increased education on critical media consumption.