THE UNLV (UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS) AFRICAN AMERICANS UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS PERCEPTION OF ADVERTISING SPOTS.

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PART FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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DECLARATION

I, Elisa Bonifay, declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School’s academic honesty policy.

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ABSTRACT

When looking toward the future prospects of the African American demographic some key factors indicate a fertile economic opportunity for corporations. Their $1.03 trillion growing buying power is a target to definitely considerate as marketers (Ester E.T. Franklin, 2014). Previous research found that African American tend to respond positively to advertising and consume television and video at higher rates than the general population, but don’t feel valued and acknowledged by marketers (Ester E.T. Franklin, 2014) who are essentially targeting ethnic groups by adapting advertisings dedicated to the white dominance (Delbert Hawkins, David Mothersbaugh, 2009). Previous findings showed that they don’t feel well portrayed and understood as a culture in the advertising industry. But what about the new generation? This generation Y ultra connected. This research look at the perception that African American of the Y generation have of advertising. While numerous studies has been conducted on the subject, none of them focused on the Y Generation which is considered the most interconnected and technologically friendly generation in the current workforce. Paul Peter and Jerry Olson (1996) in discussion of subcultures and social class in their Consumer Behavior textbook postulate that “Consumers in different age categories are likely to have somewhat different values, cultural meanings, and behavior patterns. Partly, this is because people in these age categories grew up in different decades with different cultural experiences.” Do the African American Y Generation think in the same way? We conducted a survey among 300 students living in Las Vegas, most advertised city in the world.
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

During the last five years, there has been a strategic debate among marketers about the rapid growth of ethnic minority populations and talk of “minority-majorities” (Lichter, 2014) in the United States of America. Being the most demographically diverse country among the world’s Western democracies, the nation has moved well beyond the “melting pot” metaphor (Alba and Nee 2003). The U.S. Census Bureau revealed that the percentage of non-Hispanic whites decreased from 69.1% to 63.7% between 2000 and 2010. It also indicates that the non-Hispanic white population is expected to decline roughly from 197 million in 2010 to 186 million in 2050. In contrast, America’s minority populations will nearly double in size over the next 40 years, increasing from 112 million to 213 million persons. Almost 100 per cent of the country’s population growth in the coming years will come from ethnic segments. This statement is challenging for marketers who need to create meaningful campaigns reaching the largest audience.

However, culture is one of the main factors which made a consumer’s perception of advertising different from another. The census officially recognizes six ethnic and racial categories: White American, Native American and Alaska Native, Asian American, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and people of two or more races. The African-Americans population, which has grown 64 percent faster than the rest of the country since 2010 (Nielsen, 2010), totaling 44.5 million people, make up 14 percent of the total U.S population. When looking toward the future prospects of the African American demographic some key factors indicate a fertile economic opportunity for corporations as their $1.03 trillion growing buying power is a target to definitely consider as marketers (Ester E.T. Franklin, 2014). Previous research found that African American tend to respond positively to advertising and consume television and video at higher rates than the general population, but don’t feel valued and acknowledged by marketers (Ester E.T. Franklin, 2014) who are essentially targeting ethnic groups by adapting advertisements dedicated to the white dominance (Delbert Hawkins, David Mothersbaugh, 2009). Marketing to African American should be based on the same principles as marketing to any other group. That is, the market should be analyzed carefully, relevant needs should be identified among one or more segments of the market, and the entire marketing mix should be designed to meet the needs of the target segments. A common mistake when communicating with any ethnic group is to assume that its members are the same as the larger culture except for superficial differences (McGraw-Hill, 2009), a strategy that ignores the power of a consumer base 44.5 million strong. Previous research found that African-Americans are very receptive to advertising and programming that include positive cultural themes and include people of color. They are more likely to support or purchase products and services that are represented or owned by people of the same ethnicity. Cultural identity and ethnicity appear to be key drivers for consumption for African-Americans (Nielsen, 2012). But can these findings be generalized and applied to new generations (Alexander, 2012)? It is imperative for marketers to understand whether or not the tactics used with previous generations, still hold true for the new generation of consumers (Meyers; Morgan, 2012).

The justification for choosing African Americans of the Y Generation for this study springs from a statement by Paul Peter and Jerry Olson (1996) in discussion of subcultures and social class in their Consumer Behavior textbook. They postulate that “Consumers in different age categories are likely to have somewhat different values, cultural meanings, and behavior patterns. Partly, this is because people in these age categories grew up in different decades with different cultural experiences.” More than
half of the African American population is under the age of 35, compared to the 47 percent of the total one (Nielsen, 2012). Representing 22.9% of the overall African American population, the African American Y Generation are the most intensive users of the internet in the USA, based on length of time and frequency (Jackson et al., 2008). Younger African Americans are a driving force for popular culture and tend to be early adopters of new technologies and communication tools. They are very image conscious and tend to be strong influences and trendsetters in everything from music to electronics and fashion. They are much more receptive than their White counterparts to both traditional and digital advertising (Hansel Burley; Lucy Barnard-Brak; Aretha Faye Marbly; Christopher Deason, 2010) and so represent a huge market opportunity for American organizations.

While numerous research has been done on African American perception of how they are marketed to, only a few are focusing on the African American of the Y Generation and those findings deals with online attitude only. The research question of this dissertation being:

**WHAT IS THE PERCEPTION THAT THE UNLV (UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS) AFRICAN AMERICANS UNDERGRADUATES HAVE OF ADVERTISING SPOTS?**

We aims to understand how African American younger generation actually perceive advertising spots. What do they think of them? How do they feel about them? Does it match with their culture, their values and the expectations they could have from marketers?

To get deeper answers of those questions we chose a specific place to carry out our research. Nevada being the closest state to crossing the threshold of becoming a majority-minority state (after Hawaii, Columbia, California, New Mexico and Texas), with a population 48.5% minority, we found interesting to focus on a demographic changing state. Then how not to chose Las Vegas as a city to conduct a research dealing with advertising? Being one if not the most advertised place in the world, its inhabitants are constantly exposed even over exposed to visual messages and marketers have to make stronger efforts to get noticed by consumers. We are hoping to get deeper insights thanks to this over exposition.

In Las Vegas, we chose UNLV, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, as a place to conduct both the quantitative and qualitative survey. Why? UNLV is one of the nation’s most diverse campuses for undergraduate students, according to the 2013 U.S. News & World Report best colleges rankings. This is the second consecutive year UNLV has received this designation. The publication, which annually ranks the nation’s top universities in a variety of categories, used student enrollment data from the 2011-2012 school year and factors in the proportion of minority students and the overall mix of the campus student body. According to the report, the Campus Ethnic Diversity category identifies colleges where students are most likely to encounter undergraduates from racial or ethnic groups different from their own. A diversity index from 0.0 to 1.0 is assigned to each university. UNLV’s diversity index was 0.70 – a tie for eighth place with four other universities. At UNLV, 51 percent of all undergraduate students reported being part of a racial or ethnic minority. With 8% of undergraduate students being African American, UNLV is devoted to getting insights from students to improve their experience on-site. In 2012 for example, the African American Student Experience Survey was developed by the Center for Social Justice in response to multiple survey findings indicating African American students tended to rate their student experience lower than other ethnicities and reported a higher percentage of discrimination. We found helpful to manage a research in a place where 35% of the survey respondents said that they would be” interested in participating in a
dialog group of African American students”. Our analysis will be conducted in two phases, the first one being a qualitative one with an administration of an online survey inviting African American students to share their perception of chosen advertising spots; the second one being a qualitative one with focus group inviting African American students to discuss on the same subject.

We have five research objectives for this study:

1. Gain an understanding of how the African American of the Y Generation view the role of advertising and how they “consume” it.

2. Gain an understanding of how advertising spots affects the consumer buying behaviour of African American Y Generation.

3. Explore the African American of the Y Generation’s perception of how they are marketed to by determining if they are properly portrayed in advertising.

4. Explore the African American of the Y Generation’s perception of which industries, brands or companies portrayed them properly through advertising and why.

5. Explore the African American of the Y Generation’s perception of which industries, brands or companies stigmatize them and how.

The rationale of the topic is that understanding the perception African American of the Y Generation have of advertising spots, as well as better apprehend their expectations in how to market them properly will help American organizations, brands and marketers to fill the existing disconnection and provide solutions on how to better target them, how to best reach them and allow them to fully benefit from this fast growing buying power segment.

This dissertation will be organized as follows: We’ll first critically analyze the current body of knowledge through the literature review. Its first chapter will be dedicated to the notion of culture, its definition, concepts and models. The goal here isn’t to analyze the African American culture, but understand what culture is, what is it composed of. We’ll then through the chapter three analyzes the perception of advertising by first defining its concept and process and then by determining the key elements which influence the consumer perception of advertising. The chapter four will be dedicated to culture and its effect on perception of advertising. We’ll understand how big this influence is, how and why. The chapter five will be dedicated to the perception that African American have of advertising and we’ll conclude this dissertation with a final chapter on the Y Generation and their attitudes towards media and especially advertising. Through our research question, we decide not to focus on a single medium, but on advertising spots in general. We want our respondents to focus on the advertising spot itself, the content, the message, rather than the media broadcasting the message, which can change the perception that one’s have on the spot itself.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. THEME I: CULTURE

"Most anthropologists would agree that recognition of the nature and importance of culture is the single most important insight that has marked the development of the study of man." Pertti J. Pelto

Culture is the first concept to review for this research. Through this chapter, we aim to understand where culture come from and how it affects groups and individuals. Our intention is not to analyze the African American culture but to prepare ourselves to face the difficulty of interpreting and understanding objectively a culture which is different from ours.

2.1.1. DEFINITION & CONCEPT

Culture exists at any point in time of organized human life. Anthropologists define culture as learned and shared concepts, values, or beliefs, or as an adaptive system. An adaptive system means that culture is an abstract. It is a continuum which is in constant change.

To understand a society we can best study and learn about it through the approach of the anthropologists. Anthropology is the science that deals with the origins, physical and cultural development, biological characteristics, and social customs and belief of humankind. It is "the living activities and the thoughts of members of society which must be analyzed in order to fully elicit the culture of any society." (Moerish, 1976) In 1870, British anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor was the first one to establish in English the word "culture" with its anthropological meaning. Culture was previously referring to excellence in art or education. He defined culture as "a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Tylor considered culture to be a thing and used the term in the singular form - culture in the wholistic sense. However, Franz Boas also called "Father of American Anthropology" highlighted the fact that there were many different cultures and each of them have their own more or less unique, historically set of cultural traits - culture in the partitive sense.

In 1952, Anthropologists Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn compiled a list of 164 different definitions and separate them into seven categories: descriptive, historical, normative, psychological, structural, genetic, incomplete. They finally characterize the concept as being a ""set of attributes and products of human societies, and therewith of mankind, which are extrasomatic and transmissible by mechanisms other than biological heredity." It explains how individuals in a group acquire their behavioral repertory rather than inherit them genetically. Culture has also been conceived as an adaptive system. This definition has been provided by Leslie White, in 1959 which describes culture as being "an extrasomatic mechanism employed by [humans] in order to make [their] life secure and continuous." White describes culture as being a "system" which includes numerous components that interrelated with other components in a specific configuration.

The concept of culture has been criticized by scholars. Between the 1970s and 1980s, it appears to be an ideological position rather than a scientific concept. Nevertheless, the concept is useful when it is defined with an analytical purpose in mind. Part of
the present difficulty is that until recently individual cultures were conceived as units that were more or less bounded and autonomous. Thus, no population can be adequately characterized as a single culture or by a single cultural descriptor. Everyone is simultaneously a member of several different cultural groups and unavoidably carry several layers of mental programming within themselves: At a national level according to one’s country, a regional, ethnic, religious or linguistic affiliation, at a gender level but also at a generation level, role category, social class level and an organizational or corporate level (Hofstede, 1991). This is why the notion of “subculture(s)” is needed (Avruch, 1998).

To summarize, culture is a shared system of meanings which is learned and inherited. Culture is not right or wrong. There is no cultural absolute, there are no scientific standards for considering one group as intrinsically superior or inferior to another. “Cultural relativism affirms that one culture has no absolute criteria for judging the activities of another culture as “low” or “noble”. Culture is a continuum, but that doesn’t mean that national cultures don’t change. At the deepest level, the level of values, cultures may change only slowly. These commonalities are being transferred from generation upon generation, especially from parents to their children, not by what they say, but by how they behave in emotionally crucial situations.

2.1.2. ANALYZING CULTURE

In the case of our research it is important to ask how to analyze a culture? To answer those questions we interested ourselves in the different layers of depth in the culture and its theories with two different models. We’ll also distinguish culture from personality to remain objective and avoid generalization.

2.1.2.1. LAYERS OF DEPTH IN CULTURE

2.1.2.2. SCHEIN’S LAYERS OF DEPTH

Edgar Henry Schein, a professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management has made a notable mark on the field of culture. He explained that culture is manifested at different layers of depth (Schein, 1984). In analyzing the culture of a particular group or organization it is desirable to distinguish three fundamental levels at which culture manifests itself:

**Observable artifacts:** These include the architecture and physical surroundings; its products; its technologies; its style (shown through clothing, art, publications, etc.); its published values and mission statement; its language, gossip, jargon, and humor; its myths and stories; and its practices, rituals, ceremonies, and taboos. To analyze why members behave the way they do, we often look for the values that govern behaviour, which is the second level in Figure 1.

**Values:** The easy way to know about the value of a specific culture is to focus on what people say as the reason for their behaviour, what they ideally would like those reasons to be, and what are often their rationalizations for their behaviour. Yet, the underlying reasons for their behaviour remain concealed or unconscious. The domain of values can be divided into (1) ultimate, non-debatable, taken for-granted values for which the term “assumptions” is more appropriate. We know we are dealing with an assumption when we encounter in our informants a refusal to discuss something, or when they consider us “insane” or “ignorant”
for bringing something up and (2) debatable, overt, espoused values, for which the term “values” is more applicable. (Spencer-Oatey, 2012)

**Basics underlying assumptions:** To really understand a culture and to ascertain more completely the group’s values and behaviour, it is imperative to delve into the underlying assumptions, which are typically unconscious but which actually determine how group members perceive, think and feel (Spencer-Oatey, 2012).

![Image: The levels of culture & their interaction (Minor adaptation of Schein, 1984)](image)

Figure 1: The levels of culture & their interaction (Minor adaptation of Schein, 1984)

These data are easy to obtain but hard to interpret (Schein, 1990). We can describe “how” a group constructs its environment and “what” behaviour patterns are discernible among the members, but we often cannot understand the underlying logic – “why” a group behaves the way it does. (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). Being aware of the fact that a culture includes different layers will help us to remain objectives regarding the information we will collect from the sample as we know that most of the reasons why they act in a certain way is unconscious. However, as being unconscious, collecting information about the reason why will be hard, especially when, we as French researchers belongs to a culture which is different from the American one, and even more different than the African American one.
2.12.3. Hofstede's Layers of Depth

Dutch social psychologist, Geert Hofstede gave a description of the concept of culture as being “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede, 1994). He has made a distinction into four layers, when describing culture: Symbols, Heroes, Rituals and Values. Symbols are words, gestures, pictures or objects that carry a particular meaning which is only recognized by those who share the culture. The words in a language or jargon belong to this category, as do dress, hairstyles.... New symbols are easily developed and old ones disappear. Heroes are persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics which are highly prized in a culture, and who thus serve as models for behavior. Rituals are collective activities, technically superfluous in reaching desired ends, but which, within a culture, are considered as socially essential: they are therefore carried out for their own sake. Ways of greeting and paying respect to others, social and religious ceremonies are examples. Symbols, heroes, rituals can be subsumed under the term practices. The core of culture is formed by values. Values are broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others. Values are feelings with an arrow to it: they have a plus and a minus side. They deal with: evil vs. good dirty vs. clean ugly vs. beautiful unnatural vs. natural abnormal vs. normal paradoxical vs. logical irrational vs. rational.

![Image of Hofstede's layers of depth]

Figure 2: Culture as an onion – Manifestations of culture at different levels of depth (Geert Hofstede)

This onion diagram is more accessible and make the collect of information easier than Schein's levels of culture. Rituals, Heroes and Symbols are easily noticeable and can be explicitly explained by the members of a culture, it’s less unconscious than basics assumptions or values. It might make the values more explicit as more information are clearly collectable without really having to interpret it.

2.2. Models

Culture is a descriptive and not an evaluative concept. Geert Hofstede and American Anthropologist Edward T. Hall are the most influential researchers regarding cross-cultural study. They both create models to enable the comparison between country’s culture.
2.2.1. GEERT HOFSTEDÉ'S 6-D MODEL

In his research Hofstede identified six dimensions, which can be used to differentiate nations according to their cultures: individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, and long term orientation. Those results help to understand if the culture is individualist versus collectivist, if the hierarchy is well established and respected, and the population vulnerability or need for achievement and success. It also indicates if one population is attached to its past and is willing or not to move toward a modern society. In the context of this research, having a better understanding of the overall American culture might help to understand the perception of some of its citizens. If we explore the US culture through the lens of some of the dimensions of the 6-D Model, we can get a good overview of the deep driving factors of American culture:

The fairly low score on Power Distance(40) in combination with one of the most Individualist (91) cultures in the world reflects itself in the American promise of “liberty and justice for all.” This is evidenced by an explicit emphasis on equal rights in all aspects of American society and government. The American society is loosely-knit in which the expectation is that people look after themselves and their immediate families only and should not rely (too much) on authorities for support. Also, the country high score at 62 on Masculinity shows that behavior is based on the shared values that people should “strive to be the best they can be” and that “the winner takes all”. Americans will tend to display and talk freely about their “successes” and achievements in life. There exists a “can-do” mentality which creates a lot of dynamism in the society, as it is believed that there is always the possibility to do things in a better way. It is also believed that a certain degree of conflict will bring out the best of people, as it is the goal to be “the winner”. As a consequence, we see a lot of polarization and court cases. This mentality nowadays undermines the American promise of “liberty and justice for all.” Rising inequality is endangering democracy, because a widening gap among the classes may slowly push Power Distance up and Individualism down. The US scores below average, with a low score of 46, on the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension. As a consequence, the perceived context in which Americans find themselves will impact their behavior. Thus, this cultural pattern reflects that there is a fair degree of acceptance of new ideas, innovative products and a willingness to try something new or different. Americans tend to be more tolerant of ideas or opinions from anyone and allow the freedom of expression.

Those information will help to apprehend the American society and the behavior of its citizens in general. However, can we gathered everyone under the same ideas and justifications? The United States of America is the most diverse country in the world. it’s a country made of immigration and it embraces a lot of different communities, who lived together for years, but still keep their ethnic identity strong. Hofstede’s model has been criticized by scholars, mostly because his model assume that culture ends up at countries borders, while a lot of cultural differences exist within countries. Moreover, his study has been conducted on a single industry, the computer industry, and on a single company which is IBM. The sample chosen doesn’t reflect the reality of any country as the survey participants were members of middle class. There is no such country where all the population belongs to the middle class. What about the other ones? What about the younger generation? Are their behaviors similar or different? Also, his study focus on the corporate culture of each country and the way employees react within organizations. Aren’t people different at work than home? Do they really act similarly without the pressure of a manager or even the fear of losing their jobs?
2.2.2. EDWARD T. HALL'S CULTURAL ICEBERG MODEL

Edward Twitchell Hall, Jr. was an American anthropologist and cross-cultural researcher. He is remembered for developing the concept of social cohesion, a description of how people behave and react in different types of culturally defined personal space. In 1976, he developed the iceberg analogy of culture. If the culture of a society was an iceberg, then there are some aspects visible, above the water, but there is a larger portion hidden beneath the surface. The external, or conscious, part of culture is what we can see and is the top of the iceberg and includes behaviors and some beliefs. The internal, or subconscious, part of culture is below the surface of a society and includes some beliefs and the values and thought patterns that underlie behavior.

Figure 3: Hall’s Iceberg Model

Hall suggests that the only way to learn the internal culture of others is to actively participate in their culture. When one first enters a new culture, only the most overt behaviors are apparent. As one spends more time in that new culture, the underlying beliefs, values, and thought patterns that dictate that behavior will be uncovered. What this model teaches us is that we cannot judge a new culture based only on what we see when we first enter it. We must take the time to get to know individuals from that culture and interact with them. Only by doing so can we uncover the values and beliefs that underlie the behavior of that society.

This model seems to be the most partial one, the more objective one. Collecting information on a population and on a culture objectively is hard and quite impossible as our mind, even as an aware researcher, is conditioned according to our own culture, our own values, beliefs and even our own personality.

2.3. CULTURE AND PERSONALITY

If culture is how we behave as a member of a group, identity relates to how we think about ourselves as people, how we think about other people around us, and what we imagine other think of us. While culture is learned and transmitted through the process of interacting with one's environment, personality is specific to an individual, inherited, and demonstrate the uniqueness of each individual. His own identity (De Mooji, 1997). Consequently, sharing a same culture doesn’t make it humans beings similar. Dutch social psychologist, Geert Hofstede distinguished culture from human nature on one side and from an individual's
personality on the other side. Where as it is still under discussion among social scientists where the clear borders between human nature, culture and personality is.

![Diagram of three levels of uniqueness in human mental programming](image)

Figure 4: Three levels of uniqueness in human mental programming (Geert Hofstede, 2002)

Human nature is what is called "instinct" it is universal and inherited, it differs from culture, which as we previously mentioned, is learned and specific to a group or a category (gender, organization...). The personality also distinguishes itself and is inherited and learned. It’s specific to each individual. The models we previously mentioned can be distorted as human beings can belong to the same culture, but their opinion or attitudes, even their beliefs can be different depending on the personality of each of those individuals. This notion is important to know for our study as we don’t want to generalize a single opinion of advertising to the whole African American culture.

2.4. CONCLUSION

Culture is a complex concept who shapes peoples mind and behavior under common colds. It has different layers of depth and remains hard to analyze as being a descriptive concept rather than an evaluative one. Members of a same culture tend to have similar attitudes and behavior, even perception but those attributes may also differ depending on the personality of each of those members. After Gaining a better understanding of what culture is and what is it composed of, we’ll then analyze the perception of advertising to be able to better understand how culture influences the perception of advertising.
3. THEME2 - PERCEPTION OF ADVERTISING

Perception of advertising is the key notion of this research. To be able to analyze a specific population’s perception of advertising we need to define and analyze the concept of perception to finally find out what are the key determinants which influence the consumer perception of advertising.

3.1. PERCEPTION

3.1.1. DEFINITION & PROCESS

Perception means the process by which an individual selects, organizes, and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. In other words, when a person is confronted with a situation or stimuli he or she interprets the stimuli into something meaningful to him or her based on prior experiences. However, what an individual interprets or perceives may be substantially different from reality.

The perceptual process, which is shown in Figure 5, follows four stages: stimulation, registration, organization, and interpretation. A person’s awareness and acceptance of the stimuli play an important role in the perception process. Receptiveness to the stimuli is highly selective and may be limited by a person’s existing belief, attitude, motivation, and personality (Assael, 1995). Individuals will select the stimuli that satisfy their immediate needs (perceptual vigilance) and may disregard stimuli that may cause psychological anxiety (perceptual defense).

![Figure 5: The perceptual process](image-url)
We take in information through all five of our senses, but our perceptual field (the world around us) includes so many stimuli that it is impossible for our brains to process and make sense of it all. So, as information comes in through our senses, various factors influence what actually continues on through the perception process (Susan T. Fiske and Shelley E. Taylor, 1991). We tend to pay attention to information that is salient. Salience is the degree to which something attracts our attention in a particular context. Things that are visually or aurally stimulating and things that meet our immediate needs or interests will be selected. (Susan T. Fiske and Shelley E. Taylor, 1991).

Although selecting and organizing incoming stimuli happen very quickly, and sometimes without much conscious thought, interpretation can be a much more deliberate and conscious step in the perceptual process. After we have attended to a stimulus, and our brains have received and organized the information, we interpret it in a way that makes sense using our existing information about the world. Interpretation simply means that we take the information that we have sensed and organized and turn it into something that we can categorize.

This research aims to understand how African American of the Y Generation reacts through the stimuli of different advertising spots. What is their interpretation of it? Collecting their attitudes and behaviors will help answer those questions. Why?

### 3.2. ATTITUDES

Attitude is closely related to perception. Our attitude, the way we behave, tell a lot on our perception of the surrounding environment, including when we are confronted to advertising.

Allport (1935) defined an attitude as a mental or neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence on the individual’s response to all objects and situations to which it is related. A simpler definition of attitude is a mindset or a tendency to act in a particular way due to both an individual’s experience and temperament. Typically, when we refer to a person's attitudes, we are trying to explain his or her behavior.

Attitudes are a complex combination of things we tend to call personality, beliefs, values, behaviors, and motivations. An attitude includes three components:

- an affect (a feeling),
- cognition (a thought or belief),
- behavior (an action).

And have two important aspects:

- Direction (positive/negative, for or against)
- Intensity (strength of feeling).

A person’s attitudes are easy to notice as it results in a concrete behavior and not only a state of mind as perception can be.
Analyzing the behavior of the sample watching and commenting different advertising spots will help us to get a better appreciation of what their perception is as a group from a same culture. Just like perception, attitude formation is a result of learning, modeling others, and our direct experiences with people and situations. It influences decisions, guide behaviors, and impact what we selectively remember. In an academic context, attitudes tend to be much more explicit and precise to analyze than perception and culture, which remains if not unconscious, hard to explain and describe for the individual who actually perceive the stimuli.

3.3. KEY DETERMINANTS INFLUENCING THE CONSUMERS PERCEPTION OF ADVERTISING

Numerous research has highlighted the construct of attitude toward advertising in general and developed models to examine its underlying antecedents (Bauer and Greyser, 1968; Sandage and Leckenby, 1980; Lutz, 1985; Muehling, 1987; Andrews, 1989; Pollock and Mittal, 1993; Shavit et al., 1998; Mehta, 2000; Beard, 2003; Dutta-Bergman, 2006; Petrovici and Paliwoda, 2007). Fishbein (1967, p. 53) defines attitude as “a learned predisposition of human beings”. As part of a learned predisposition human behaviour, Kotler (2000) further elaborates attitude as an individual personal evaluation, emotional feeling attached and action tendency toward some objects or ideas. In relations to the advertising industry, Bauer and Greyser (1968) take the view of attitude towards advertising as the audience behaviour towards the advertising. According to Mehta (2000), consumers’ attitude towards advertising is one of the influential indicators of advertising effectiveness because the consumer’s cognitive ability towards the advertising are reflected in their thoughts and feelings and subsequently will influence their attitude towards advertising (Mackenzie and Lutz, 1989). McKenzie and Lutz defined attitude toward advertising in general as “a learned predisposition to respond in consistently favorable or unfavorable manner to advertising in general”. In 1989, they modified the existing model of Attitudes towards Advertising Formation and define six key determinants influencing the consumer perception of advertising:

- **Advertising credibility:** Advertising represents consumers’ perceptions of the truthfulness and believability of advertising in general, not simply the particular ad in question (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989). The credibility of an advertisement is affected by the company’s credibility and the person who brings a message (Goldsmith, Lafferty and Newell, 2000).

- **Advertising perceptions:** Ad perceptions are defined as a multidimensional array of consumer perceptions of the advertising stimulus, including executional factors but excluding perceptions of the advertised brand. (Cf. Lutz, MacKenzie, and Belch 1983).

- **Attitude toward the advertiser:** Consumers’ affective reactions to the sponsor of the ad stimulus of interest are expected to carry some weight in the formation of attitudes. Attitude toward the advertiser is seen as representative of an accumulation of both information and experience acquired over time.
- **Attitude toward advertising**: Attitude toward advertising is defined as a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner toward advertising in general. Bauer and Greyser (1968), in their classic study Advertising in America: The Consumer View, were the first to examine attitudes toward advertising systematically. They observed a relationship between consumers’ attitudes toward advertising and their subsequent ratings of specific ads as being annoying, enjoyable, informative, or offensive, categories often used in reaction profile studies.

- **Mood**: Mood is defined as the consumer’s affective state at the time of exposure to the ad stimulus.

![Modified Structural Model of Attitudes toward advertising](image)

**Figure 6: Modified Structural Model of Attitudes toward advertising (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989)**

Based on extant literature, the following determinants also indicate a strong relationship with consumers’ attitude towards advertising (Yang, 2000; Ramaprasad & Thurwanger, 1998; Pollay & Mittal, 1993; Bauer & Greyser, 1968):

- **Informative**: Advertising plays an important and legitimate role in delivering information (Rotzoll, Haefner and Sandage, 1989). Wang, Sun, Lei, and Toncar (2009) argue that the information-seeking factor acts as a positive predictor for the formation of consumers’ attitude towards advertising.
● **Hedonic/pleasure:** Consumers like and prefer to see advertisements that have more entertainment and pleasurable elements, the more the pleasure the better it is (Alwitt and Prabhaker 1992; Pollay and Mittal, 1993).

● **Good for the economy:** An essential view of advertising supporters is that advertising is the lifeblood of business. Thus, it gives consumers’ information about products and services and supports them to improve the customer's standard of living (Belch & Belch, 2008).

Previous research explicitly relates that a lot of different elements influence one’s perception of advertising. However, none of them contrast the fact that those elements are different depending on one's culture. From a culture to another, the notion of credibility differs, the notion of hedonism and pleasure too.

### 3.4. CONCLUSION

Perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting information. This process affects our behavior because we respond to stimuli differently, whether they are objects or persons, based on how we perceive them. Given the massive amounts of stimuli taken in by our senses, we only select a portion of the incoming information to organize and interpret. We select information based on salience. We tend to find salient things that are visually or aurally stimulating and things that meet our needs and interests. Expectations also influence what information we select. We organize information that we select into patterns based on proximity, similarity, and difference. We interpret information using schemata, which allow us to assign meaning to information based on accumulated knowledge and previous experience. When someone is exposed to an advertising, the same process is on and the perception of this advertising will differ depending on one’s previous experience with advertising in general, but also with the brand who advertise, its credibility and more...

Now we know more about culture on one hand and the process of perception, in general and in an advertising context in another hand, we can critically analyze the effect of culture on the perception of advertising.
4. THEME 3 - CULTURE AND ITS EFFECT ON PERCEPTION OF ADVERTISING

Research supports the idea that culture conditions individual perception and cognition by providing sets of values, life expectations, and needs (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), which affect people's basic sensory perceptions. Culture serves as a source of lay theories about the world and shapes how people attend, think, and react, crafting their life views and philosophies. Message comprehension, message elaboration and behavioral intention change from a culture to another. We'll analyze how and why in an advertising context.

4.1. CULTURE AND ADVERTISING

In 1983, Levitt argues that people around the world share the same tastes and desires and will therefore be persuaded by universal advertising appeals. On the other hand, Mooji (1994) and Muller (1996) argued that cultural factors have a strong impact on communication strategies and thus standardizing advertising across different markets is difficult to achieve. Considerable research has been conducted to indicate cross-cultural differences as a barrier of advertising standardization (Mooji, 1994; Mooji, 1997; Jones, 2000). Witkowski and Kellner (1998) examined attitudes toward TV advertising in Germany and America and showed that despite cultural differences existed, attitudes in these two countries were largely convergent taken as a whole. As noted by Taylor and Miracle (1997), US and Korean participants responded differently to television commercials with varied levels of information content, a phenomenon that could be attributed to cultural differences.

Research in the past has revealed that the content and appeal of advertisements vary from culture to culture, as communication patterns are influenced by culture (Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Culter et al. 1992; Ramaprasad and Hasegawa, 1992). Pollay and Gallagher (1990) advance that cultural values are the foundation of advertising themes, messages as well as appeals, which are to reinforce and reflect cultural values.

De Mooij (2004) also highlights the correlation between culture and advertisement content by referring to schemata. Indeed, we interpret information using schemata, which allow us to assign meaning to information based on accumulated knowledge and previous experience. De Mooij (2004) argues that individuals will encode advertising messages only if it fits with individuals schemata, while on the other hand, consumers tend to ignore messages that do not correlate with their schemata.

Gregory and Munch (1997) and Taylor et al. (1997) found that advertisements are more persuasive and effective if they mirror the cultural values than if they neglect to take culture specific values into account. Individuals adapt their cultural beliefs, value systems and perception processes and thus respond to advertisements that reflect their culture and values, due to these individuals from different cultures prefer different advertising appeals and messages (Rhodes and Emery, 2003). Singh et al.'s (1962) findings throw light at this, by demonstrating that advertisements from the USA are not effective in India, as the American advertisements did not mirror the Indian consumers’ values and therefore have not been adequately perceived and processed by Indian individuals (Fam and Grohs, 2007). Similarly, Okazaki et al. (2006) found that advertisements that have been
adapted to the local customs of cultures, taking cultural values into consideration, result in higher levels of advertising effectiveness and acceptance, which positively affects consumer attitudes towards the advertisement and purchase.

4.2. CULTURE AND ADVERTISING APPEAL

The appeal in advertising is a comprehensive concept. It includes values and motives that define the central message. Moriarty, Mitchell, and Wells, (2015) state that an appeal “connects with some emotion that makes the product particularly attractive or interesting, such as security, esteem, fear, sex, and sensory pleasure.

Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) carried out a widely recognized study by the means of content analysis, which in the past is the most common research methods when comparing advertisements from different countries. The comparison was carried out amongst advertisements of 55 country pairs, consisting of countries with similar and dissimilar value systems. Findings indicate that cultures with similar value systems feature similar content and appeals in advertisements while cultures with different value systems show significant differences in their advertisement. These findings indicate that Hofstede’s (1980) Cultural Dimensions can be used as a tool in order to predict advertising preferences of consumers from different countries as these advertisement preferences are influenced and guided by the consumers’ cultural values. Especially the differences between cultures from the individualistic and collectivist dimension are often explored, as it suggests that this dimension is a key determinant in consumer behavior, and shows the most significant differences within different cultures (Hofstede, 1980 and De Mooij, 2010).

Albers-Miller and Stafford (1999) have identified the significant impact of differences in cultural dimensions on the perception of emotional and rational appeals. The study carried out a content analysis of magazine advertisements across Brazil, Mexico, USA and Taiwan. Consumer in Taiwan, a highly collectivist culture, have been found to prefer an emotional appeal, especially if it implies belonging and affiliation, as collectivist cultures are highly family and group oriented. On the other hand, consumers from the USA, a highly individualistic and achievement-oriented culture, prefer advertisements with a rational appeal. Similarly, Hong et al. (1987) found that Japanese (also a collectivist culture) advertisements more frequently contain emotional appeals than American advertisements, where comparative appeals have been found to be more common than in Japan. On the other hand, consumers in collectivists and high-power distance cultures prefer emotional appeals (Zandpour and Harich, 1996).

Those findings are in correlation with a study carried out by Taylor et al. (1997), comparing the effectiveness of advertisements in the USA (an individualistic culture, applying low context communication) and Korea (a collectivist culture, applying high context communication). Findings indicate that advertisements with high information content, providing reasons for purchase and communicating product benefits are more effective in the USA than advertisements that provide less information. This could be reasoned by the assumption that consumers of individualistic cultures generally rely on factual information and evidence in the advertisements, in order to be able to reach a rational conclusion before engaging in a purchase (Zandpour and Harich, 1996).
4.3. WHAT IS AFFECTED?

Research supports the idea that culture conditions individual perception and cognition by providing sets of values, life expectations, and needs (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), which affect people’s basic sensory perceptions.

4.3.1. PERCEPTION OF EMOTIONS

Culture influences two types of primary emotions through self-construal: ego-focused and other-focused emotions. Ego-focused emotions are “emotions, such as anger, frustration, and pride,” which “have the individual's internal attributes (his or her own needs, goals, desires, or abilities) as the primary referent” (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p. 235); Other-focused “emotions, such as sympathy, feelings of interpersonal communion, and shame, have another person... as the primary referent” (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p. 235) Ego-focused emotions dominate individualist cultures, whereas other-focused emotions are more prevalent in collectivist cultures. The accurate perception of the emotions of others is culturally bound (Ekman & Friesen, 1971; Izard, 1971). In a series of experimental manipulations, Masuda, Ellsworth, Mesquita, Leu, Tanida, and Van de Veerdonk (2008) asked Japanese and American participants to judge a central figure’s emotion from his or her facial expression when surrounded by other people expressing the same or different emotion. The findings indicate that the surrounding people’s emotions influenced Japanese perceptions, but not Americans’ perceptions of the central person’s feelings. The “stimulus as perceived” differs in the East versus the West in that the former needs contextual information to evaluate a person’s emotion correctly (Matsumoto, 1992). Conversely, Westerners, who treat people as separate and autonomous, view facial emotions as expressing an inner, authentic emotional state distinguishable from that of the group discerning little difficulty in inferring a person’s emotion.

4.3.2. PERCEPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND AESTHETIC PREFERENCES

Differences exist in the way individualist and collectivist societies attend to their surrounding environment, respectively reflecting the narrow focus (on the shelf) versus the wide focus (on the group). Nisbett and Masuda (2003) find that people from different cultures have differentiated habitual patterns of attention and perception. Specifically, several experiments confirm that Asian cultures attend more closely to the context or field (holistic perspective), whereas Western cultures primarily direct their attention to focal objects (analytical or focal perspective). These perceptual orientations are “reflected” in real, external environments: objects in Eastern environments tend to be numerous, more complex, and more interpenetrating, so the distinction between object and field becomes blurred and, therefore, relationships between objects and background elements are relatively salient. Western environments with most salient, distinctive objects, attend more to focal objects than in the field and relationships.

4.3.3. SENSORY PERCEPTION
Studies on cross-cultural differences in sensory perception concentrate in the areas of visual, olfactory, and auditory perceptions, mostly ignoring tactual and taste perceptions. The specificity of different cultural environments affects familiarity with and perception of various other stimuli. Ayabe-Kanamura, Schicker, Laska, Hudson, Distel, Kobayakawa, and Saito (1998) analyze cross-cultural differences between Japanese and Germans in their perception of smell: each group recognized its own familiar “cultural” smells better. Similarly, Curtis and Bharucha (2009) investigate cross-cultural differences in music perceptions demonstrating that Westerners find it easier to comprehend their own, culturally familiar melodies, as opposed to Eastern, hence culturally unfamiliar, ones. Overall, people are prone to culture-specific recall and recognition of stimuli before the information enters the attitude formation, decision-making, and judgment stage of consumption processes.

4.3.4. SELF ESTEEM

A positive self-view is a universal motivation (Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003), though studies report cross-cultural differences in self-esteem (e.g., Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999). North American populations, influenced by cultural norms of independence, display strong needs to view self in a positive light and typically score above the theoretical midpoint on self-esteem scales (Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989). Westerners tend to report inflated positive self-views (Taylor & Brown, 1988) or to engage in various self-protective mechanisms whenever facing threats to self-esteem (Steele, 1988). Americans engage in self-enhancement on attributes that emphasize positive aspects of their lives (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997).

These motivations are less salient in collectivist societies (Vohs & Heatherton, 2001) because people tend to favor group-esteem over self-esteem, hold a dominant interdependent self-construal, make fewer self-serving attributions to protect their self-esteem (Schmitt & Allik, 2005), and have low compensatory self-protective attitudes (Brockner & Chen, 1996). Kitayama and Uchida (2003) confirm that East Asians show less motivation to self-enhance than Westerners, and Japanese are more likely to engage in self-criticism, which helps them avoid future ill-perceived behavior (Kitayama et al., 1997). These findings extend to other collectivist societies: scores on self-esteem and self-view measures are usually lower in Native American collectivist cultures than in North American populations (Fryberg & Markus, 2003). These results taken together reflect the dominant cultural norms and values in collectivist societies (e.g., humility, group precedence) and suggest high levels of individual self-esteem are potential threats to group harmony.

4.4. CONCLUSION

Culture definitely affects the perception that people have towards advertising. The current body of knowledge mainly focuses on the differences between Eastern and Western population, individualist and collectivist one. But what about differences in the perception that a subculture have compared to the dominant culture of a specific country? In the case of the US, can we really generalize attitudes towards advertising and people’s perception while so many subcultures exist?
5. THEMES 4 - THE AFRICAN AMERICAN PERCEPTION OF ADVERTISING

The U.S. Census defines African-American/Black as people who have origins in, or are descendants from any of the Black racial groups of the original people of Africa. African-Americans, at 44.5 million strong, and approximately 14% of the country’s population, make up a powerful group with a growing impact on American culture and business (US Census, 2014). This demographic is largely young, 53% are under the age of 35, giving them an oversized influence on the latest trends (US Census, 2014). A marked rise in the number of African-American owned businesses has driven the recent increases in Black household income with 44 percent of all African-American households earning $50,000 or more (a 13% increase), and 23 percent earning above $75,000 (Nielsen, Essence, 2014) These surges in household income coupled with overall population growth are driving the substantial purchasing power of the African-American consumer, which is expected to reach $1.3 trillion in a few short years. The increase in Black household income has also been driven by a marked rise in the number of African-American owned businesses. Black business ownership increased 61 percent between 2002-2007, which is substantially higher than the 18 percent general market growth rate. Additionally, receipts of African-American owned businesses grew 55% compared to 28% of general market receipts during that time.

5.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN

The Nielsen and Essence customized study (2014) reveals just how important diversity and cultural identity is to African American. The majority of those surveyed, 87 percent, feel ethnic recognition is important compared to 59 percent of the general population. 73% of African-American adults 18-54 years old stated that cultural/ethnic heritage is a critical part of their cultural identity. Among African-Americans 18-54 with a household income greater than $50,000, 77 percent indicated their heritage was an important part of who they are compared to 58 percent of the general population.

Any discussion regarding African-American cultural identity is not complete without a look at what many consider the foundation of that identity: the Black church. Fifty-six percent of African-Americans say they attend church regularly. The church provides more than fundamental religious training, faith reinforcement and spiritual healing. Blacks often depend on churches for community news, support services, trusted leadership, and to mobilize for community activism. Religious influence in the Black community has evolved beyond Sunday morning worship, and can be found across various platforms. Radio, television, print and digital media with religious and gospel formats or content tend to see higher consumption patterns with African-Americans than with general market audiences (Nielsen; Essence, 2014)

5.2. AFRICAN AMERICAN MEDIA ATTITUDES

African-Americans have a diverse approach to receiving content and information—they fully engage and connect through various mainstream and niche media outlets and platforms, and they consume more content than other groups on all fronts.
African American watch the most television of any group (200 hours per month—roughly 60 more hours than the total audience). While African-Americans continue to view television in the traditional ways with real-time watching, a change in viewing behavior is emerging as a result of time shifted viewing, video on demand, smart TV’s, and internet streaming; 25-48 minutes per day are spent viewing video online, exceeding the usage of the general market. They are also heavy users of audio/video media, video games, and social networking extending across both PC and mobile devices. Smartphone penetration is 78% among Black consumers with mobile video viewing at an increase of 24 percent year-over-year. They feel stronger about the utility of social media and its impact on products and brands than the general market. African-Americans are 81 percent more likely to show support for a favorite company or brand using social media than the general population, and 76 percent more likely to share opinions by posting reviews and ratings online (Nielsen; Essence, 2014). Smartphone penetration is 81%, slightly edging the total population by 7%. On a monthly basis, blacks spend close to 56 hours using apps or mobile Internet browsers on their Smartphone and about two and a half hours watching videos on their Smartphone (Nielsen, 2012).

### 5.3 African American and Advertising, A Lack of Acknowledgement

African-Americans tend to respond positively to advertising. According to Simmons Market Research Bureau (2005), they are far more likely than the general population to notice and feel positively about a range of marketing vehicles. But by and large, the African American community in the United States does not feel culturally represented in the $177.8 billion advertising industry. The messages they receive from brands often do not reflect their lives and have little connection with how they spend their hard-
earned $1.03 trillion (and growing) buying power (Franklin, 2014). African American look for content that reflects their lives, the lives of people like them, their culture and their values. According to the Time Warner “Multicultural Media Consumer Study” by Cheskin Added Value, African Americans are more likely than other groups to use media to mirror their racial identity as they search for “characters that look like me to connect with (in) a show or movie.” At the same time they identify with diversity more today than ever and strongly desire media to represent different ethnic and racial perspectives as well as diversity among African Americans (Nielsen, 2012).

5.3.1. CULTURALLY RELEVANT ADVERTISING

Compared to the general population, African Americans are 30% more likely to believe diversity in advertising is important, and 38% are more likely to make a purchase when the advertisements have African-American people included (Nielsen, 2014). 44% of African Americans said they are more likely to purchase or support products that are owned or supported by African-Americans or other diverse groups, and 43 percent are more likely to patronize a business if it is a minority-owned entity (Nielsen, 2014). 20% of African Americans attests to being more likely to purchase a product supported or endorsed by an African-American celebrity or musician. The importance of cultural identity continues to be more significant to higher income households: 55% of African American with household incomes of $50,000 or more said they would purchase or support a product if it was sold or supported by a person of color or minority owned business, while only 20 percent of non-African-Americans in the same income bracket felt this way. Nearly half of all higher income African-Americans say they actively seek out diverse businesses.

While African-Americans place a high emphasis on diversity in advertising, diverse ad success varies by industry and product categories. The greatest difference between African-Americans’ and general populations’ feelings of how important diversity is in advertising appears in the health care and auto industries, with 82% and 70% of Blacks, respectively, reporting that diversity is important—compared with 63% and 51% of the general population who felt the same. Making sure advertising that connects with African-Americans actually reach these consumers requires some multitasking on the part of advertisers. Using multiple platforms is a necessary part of an effective marketing strategy—62% of Blacks are more likely to feel advertising content accessed via mobile phones and devices is useful. Comparatively, 53% agreed that TV ads provided useful information about new products and services, while advertising with newspapers (47%), magazines (46%), radio (39%), and internet (38%) showed similar sentiment as the general population.

5.3.2 AFRICAN AMERICAN LOW ADVERTISING INVESTMENT

In 2013, $2.6 billion was spent with media focused on African-American audiences, on Cable TV, National Magazines, Network TV, Spot Radio, and Syndicated TV. This represents a 7 percent growth over 2012, compared to a 2% increase in overall advertising spending. (Nielsen Monitor Plus, 2013) While this growth in spending is a positive sign, it should be noted that this amount is only 2.6 percent of the total $69.3 billion companies spent advertising on these media platforms in 2013 (Ester E.T. Franklin, 2014). Black audiences, who are rabid consumers, are not feeling valued or authentically acknowledged by marketers who benefit from
their consumption behaviors (Ester E.T. Franklin, 2014). "If consumption patterns dictated a company’s advertising budget.” Nielsen (2014) recently reported, “then advertisers should be spending proportionately with African-American media as follows:

- 44 percent higher spend on education and career Web sites,
- 38 percent higher spend on streaming Web sites,
- 37 percent higher spend on television (with a special emphasis on cable), and
- 15 percent higher spend on mobile phone advertising."

The top advertisers, based on spending focused on African American audiences, are in the beauty, movie, and consumer product sectors. Companies that had the highest brand recall and likeability among African-Americans feature advertising campaigns that incorporate diversity in casting and culturally relevant themes are Proctor and Gamble, L’Oréal, Pillsbury, matching African-American celebrity spokespersons and African-American couples and families. Looking more closely at advertising investments, the largest year-over-year industry changes occurred in life insurance, hair care products, loans, and universities (Nielsen Monitor-Plus, 2014)

5.4. CONCLUSION

The African American population is the segment of the US population, which consume the most media and which react more positively to advertising. However, they don’t feel acknowledged by marketers who benefits from their active consumption behavior. This study deals with the overall African American perception of advertising. What about smaller segment? Do all African Americans feel the same way? Can we apply those generalities to the Generation Y, which are way more active on media, tech savvy and consequently more exposed to advertising than their parents or grandparents?

6. THEME 5 - THE GENERATION Y

6.1. GENERATION Y DEFINITION

Nickels, McHugh and McHugh (2005) describe Generation Y as born between 1979 and 2000 and define as “inpatient, skeptical, blunt and expressive, image-driven and inexperienced” On the positive side, they describe them as “adaptable, tech savvy, able to grasp new concepts, practiced at multitasking, efficient and tolerant”. Hawkins and Co (2007) describe them as “the first generation to grow up with computers in the home and schools and with the Internet”. The term Millennials is also used, with inconsistent definitions, to refer to younger members of Generation Y or those born after 1994 (Kerin, Berowitz, & Rudelius, 2006). The generation Y represents approximately 79 million people in the U.S.
6.2. GENERATION Y KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Generation Y is known for their technological savvy. Considered the most inter-connected and technologically friendly generation in the current workforce, Y easily communicates with others and accesses information quickly and instantaneously (Cruz 2007; Bassett 2008; Erickson 2008). This level of technological emersion increasingly blurs the line between their work and personal lives. This generation is sometimes labeled the entitlement generation. Their parents’ continued financial and emotional support may have contributed to this sense of entitlement (Erickson 2008; Patalano 2008). This generation, as a whole, is expected to be the highest educated generation to date with incomes that should follow. According to online marketing expert Kelly Mooney (O’Donnell, 2006), “Gen Y is the most influential generation for retailers because it is bigger than the baby Boomer generation and its members have spending power and strong opinions at an early age.” Y is often viewed by marketers as one of the most valuable segments of the population, mainly due to the powerful combination of the group’s massive size and strong purchasing power. Also, this generation is the most culturally and ethnically diverse generation, with one-third of American children under age 18 being racial or ethnic minorities. Additionally, the presence of multicultural families and alternative lifestyles has been more a part of Generation Y’s daily life than any other generation (Erickson 2008).

6.3. GENERATION Y RESPONSE TO ADVERTISING

Findings from the previous studies have shown that television ads are less effective among younger consumers than among older ones. These results suggest that it is more difficult to persuade younger consumers with advertising messages than consumers from older generations. Generation Y tends to be less interested and more difficult to connect with, capture attention, impress, convince and entertain. The context of the past research also suggests that this is more likely a life stage phenomenon rather than a fundamental generational difference.

Y appears to strongly engage with the media they choose to view. In this regard, digital is well suited to this generation, as their relative engagement versus older viewers is stronger for digital than for television. Conversely, it appears that it is harder for advertising to achieve a breakthrough and catch the attention of the Millennials, who are notorious for multitasking and short attention spans. (Erickson 2008; Patalano 2008)

6.4. AFRICAN AMERICAN GENERATION Y

African American Y Generation represents 14% of the overall Generation Y and it’s the most intense users of the internet in the USA, based on length of time and frequency (Nielsen, 2014). A previous research suggests that for Y African American, having a racially targeted media vehicle (website) did not have a significant effect on the resulting marketing outcomes (attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the product and purchase intent) but having targeted imagery (ethnic models) did (Carter, 2008). The accepted practice of using Black models to target African American consumers is still valid in the online environment, even when the audience is a member of the new generation (Carter, 2008) but what about on other platform? What about their overall
perception of advertising? Although numerous research has been conducted on the Generation Y only one has been dedicated to the African American Generation Y consumers (Meyers and Janeice, 2012) and it deals with online marketing only. This idea provided motivation for this study.

7. LITERATURE CONCLUSION

While the research regarding the African American perception of advertising is strong, there is definitely a lack of research regarding the African American of the Generation Y perception of it. More, those research only deals with online marketing and don’t take into consideration other media or the overall perception of advertising. Considering how strongly the African American buying power is growing, considering that they are more receptive to advertising than any other segment and considering the fact the overall Generation Y engagement toward media, the African American Y Generation is worth studying. We’ll do our best to improve the current research and add to the common knowledge a deep understanding of Y African American perception and expectations towards advertising.
CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

3.1 METHODOLOGY INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we’ll discuss the research design as which research philosophy, approach and strategy we’ll use to conduct our research. We’ll also discuss the ethics and limitations of the research.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.2.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

As Johnson and Clark (2006) note, as researchers, we need to be aware of the philosophical commitments we make through our choice of research strategy since this has significant impact not only on what we do, but we understand what it is we are investigating (Saunders, Lewis, Thornill, 2009). The research onion was developed by Saunders et al. (2007). It illustrates the stages that must be covered when developing a research strategy. When viewed from the outside, each layer of the onion describes a more detailed stage of the research process (Saunders et al., 2007). The research onion provides an effective progression through which a research methodology can be designed. Its usefulness lies in its adaptability for almost any type of research methodology and can be used in a variety of contexts (Bryman, 2012).

![Figure 8: The research onion (Saunders et al. 2009)](image)

It gives us four different choices as of which research philosophy to adopt: Pragmatism, Realism, Positivism and Interpretivism:
• Positivism assumes that reality exists independently of the thing being studied. In practice this means that the meaning of phenomena is consistent between subjects (Newman, 1998).

• Conversely, constructionism suggests that the inherent meaning of social phenomena is created by each observer or group (Östlund et al., 2011). In this philosophy, one can never presume that what is observed is interpreted in the same way between the participants and the key approach is to examine differences and nuances in the respondents’ understanding.

• Realism is another philosophical position which relates to scientific enquiry. The essence of realism is that what the senses show us as reality is the truth: that objects have an existence independent of the human mind. The philosophy of realism is that there is a reality quite independent of the mind. In this sense, realism is opposed to idealism, the theory that only the mind and its contents exist. Realism is a branch of epistemology which is similar to positivism in that it assumes a scientific approach to the development of knowledge. This assumption underpains the collection of data and the understanding of these data (Saunders, Lewis, Thornill, 2009).

• Interpretivism refers to approaches emphasizing the meaningful nature of people’s participation in social and cultural life. Researchers working within this tradition analyze the meanings people confer upon their own and others’ actions and take the view that cultural existence and change can be understood by studying what people think about, their ideas, and the meanings that are important to them (Saunders, Lewis, Thornill, 2009).

We chose Interpretivism as a philosophy to adopt. Our research focuses on conducting research amongst people rather than objects. Interpretivism is based on the fact that truth is subjective and reality is constructed by human interaction. It is only possible to gain understanding of a social reality through point of views of the social actors involved (Bryman, 2008). Indeed, how could we get an understanding of the perception that UNLV African American students have of advertising spots without inviting them to share their thoughts? Interpretivism advocates that it is necessary for the researcher to understand differences between humans in our role as social actors, which depend on a specific context. In our research case, the context is cultural and three different dimensions of it are to take into consideration: first the African American culture, second the context of the generation as our target belongs to the Generation Y and finally school as our sample is enrolled at UNLV. We aim to understand and interpret without generalizing the result to neither all African Americans, all members of the Generation Y or all UNLV students so it adheres to the Interpretivism philosophy.

3.2.2. RESEARCH APPROACH

The research onion offers two different approaches, the inductive and the deductive one:

• The inductive approach is characterized as a move from the specific to the general (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this approach, the observations are the starting point for the researcher, and patterns are looking for in the data (Beiske, 2007). In this approach, there is no framework that initially informs the data collection and the research focus can thus be formed after the data has been collected (Flick, 2011). Although this may be seen as the point at which new theories
are generated, it is also true that as the data is analyzed that it may be found to fit into an existing theory (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

- The deductive approach develops the hypothesis or hypotheses upon a pre-existing theory and then formulates the research approach to test it (Silverman, 2013). This approach is best suited to contexts where the research project is concerned with examining whether the observed phenomena fit with expectation based upon previous research (Wiles et al., 2011). The deductive approach thus might be considered particularly suited to the positivist approach, which permits the formulation of hypotheses and the statistical testing of expected results to an accepted level of probability (Snieder & Larner, 2009).

We’ll use the inductive approach to remain consistent with our research philosophy and objectives. As there is currently a lack of research regarding the African American of the Generation Y and their perception of advertising, we’ll be moving from observations of the results we’ll get from the administration of the survey to theories. Gaining understanding of the meaning that UNLV African American attach to advertising by collecting data and analyzing the results without generalizing definitely belongs to the inductive approach.

### 3.2.3. RESEARCH STRATEGY

#### 3.2.3.1 SECONDARY DATA RESEARCH

The first part of our strategy consisted in secondary data research. We analyzed the current body of knowledge related to the different themes previously mentioned through academic articles, journals, literature reviews, empirical researches, books and E-books. Those materials offer reliable and academic source of information which back up our research topic area. Although these sources are credible, they have limitations. We had to critically analyze them and evaluate them to offer to the readers an efficient and consistent literature review. We also informed ourselves on Consumer behavior trends through different platforms like McKinsey.com, Trendwatching.com, Adage.com... as well as Multicultural Marketing platforms like Multicultural.com, Ethnicitymatters.com, Thinkethic.com...

Finally, in order to get immersed in the targeted culture and better apprehend it, we will also regularly read and watch African American media targeted content (Ebony Magazine, BET TV, Theroot.com...) Although these sources won’t be quoted or referenced in our research, we’ll use them as a way to better understand the African American culture and get knowledge of it in a way that academic sources can’t provide.
3.2.3.2. RESEARCH METHOD

3.2.3.2.1. THE CHOICE OF QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH ONLY

We chose to conduct quantitative research only. Qualitative research would open the door to generalization and we don’t want that. Again through the analysis of the current body of knowledge we learned that identity and personality, just as culture, influence peoples’ attitudes, opinions and behaviors. Having a focus group with 6 or 8 people might have resulted into deeper insight, but wouldn’t reflect the attitudes, opinions and behaviors of our overall sample population. Conducting individual interviews would have been the same problem as the opinion of a single individual does not reflect his community. We don’t want to generalize the attitudes of a couple of individuals to an entire generation, especially when races are involved. The solution would have been to conduct a sufficient amount of focus group to get way more insights. With the restricted amount of time allocated to us to conduct this dissertation, we decided to stand up for quantitative research only and privilege the quantity of answer to get a real understanding of the perception they have of advertising and avoid the use of qualitative research to again, avoid generalization.

Our quantitative research consisted in the administration of an online survey to UNLV African American Undergraduate students. We chose this method because we know the data obtained are reliable as the responses are limited to the alternatives stated. Moreover, coding, analysis and interpretation of data are relatively simple. We know that perception is hard to code and analyze properly, the choice of the survey made it easier as we have a lot of insights to get to remain consistent for our research.

3.2.3.2.2. SURVEY COMPOSITION

We divided the survey in different sections to collect data and reach our five research objectives, combining questions about general attitudes toward advertising, sample’s perception of how they are marketed to, brands and industry who portrays our sample properly, those which don’t, and viewing of advertisings. (cf Appendix 2)

3.2.3.2.2.1. GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARD ADVERTISING & CONSUMPTION

In order to gain an understanding of how the African American of the Y Generation view the role of advertising and how they “consume” it (Research objective 1). We dedicated the first part of our survey to the target’s general attitudes towards advertising. We aim to know if they like or dislike advertising in general, if they like to look at most advertising they are exposed to or if, in contrast, they would rather avoid watching them. We also asked them to share their level of agreement with different statement as to know if advertising is entertaining or annoying, informative and credible according to them. We mainly used multiple choice question for this part for more consistency.
3.2.3.2.2. CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

Our third research objective is gaining an understanding of how advertising affects the consumer buying behavior of the African American Y generation. To get this understanding we used three five point scale questions. The first one deals with our sample confidence using information they see on an advertising to make a purchase decision. The second one asks about how often they use advertising to help make a purchase decision and the last one is devoted to ask our sample if they are more likely to make a purchase when the advertisement they saw involved African Americans.

3.2.3.2.3. BRANDS, INDUSTRIES AND AFRICAN AMERICANS PERCEPTION

Research objectives four and five are gathered in the same last part. To explore the African American of the Y Generation’s perception of which industries, brands or companies portrayed them properly and improperly through advertising and why (research objectives 4 and 5), we used two open-ended questions. The goal here was not to influence our sample in any case and let them express their opinion without being restrained by alternatives. That’s also why we chose to place those questions before the viewing of advertising, in order our target not to be influenced by the brand we chose for those viewings of advertising.

3.2.3.2.4. SAMPLE’S PERCEPTION OF HOW THEY ARE MARKETED TO

To be able to explore the African American of the Y Generation’s perception of how they are marketed to by determining if they are properly portrayed in advertising, which is our second research objective, we chose two different approaches. The first one was questioned about diversity in advertising in general, but also how much they would like to see more African American in advertising and how likely they are to watch, like and pay attention to advertising involving African Americans. We used multiple choice questions, asking our sample to evaluate their level of agreement (Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) with six different statements.

The second approach we used was selecting four advertising for them to watch and express their feelings about. For each advertisings, similar questions will be asked: Do the sample like the ad? Would they buy the product? Can they identify themselves with one of the characters in the ad? Five point scale questions were used here for consistency. Also, for each ad, multiple choice question will be asked depending on the kind of insight we wanted to collect from each spot.

EXTRA GUM (CF APPENDIX 3)

The first advertising we chose to include in this survey is an advertising of Extra-Gum, an American brand of chewing gum featuring the love story of Sara and Juan. Through high school, picnics, prom, fights and long-distance, one thing remain constant between Juan and Sarah: Extra Gum. Each time Sarah gives Juan a stick of gum, Juan draws on the wrapper afterwards. It all comes together at the end, when Sarah is led to a private room to find that Juan had been saving these wrappers documenting
their journey. In a romantic and private setting, Sarah finds one wrapper with a drawing of Juan proposing, only to turn around to Juan actually proposing.

Thanks to the previous research we carried out for our literature review, we know that African Americans tend to respond more positively to advertising involving African American. This advertising involves white people, mostly. The name of Juan might remind of Hispanic or Latino communities, but the character looks Caucasian and none of his attitudes and behavior seems to belong to one of these two communities. We were curious to know what is the perception of our sample regarding this advertisement. First of all because this advertising calls on the emotions and is supposed to bring back memories as most of the Generation Y in general has been to high school and fell in love at some point. The factor identification is expected to be high among the members of the Y generation. But is it accurate with Y African American? This is what we tried to find out to several questions as to know if our sample likes this ad or not and if they can identify themselves with one of the characters considering the fact that all of them are white.

Figure 9: Extra Gum - The Story of Sara and Juan (released on October 7, 2015)
Available to watch here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLpDItyX0Wo

APPLE MUSIC (CF APPENDIX 4)

The second advertising we chose is an advertising from Apple which introduces the Apple Music Beat 1, the new worldwide radio station. The message of the ad is, no matter who you are or where you are in the world, music has the power to unite us. It features people, mostly belonging to the Y generation, from everywhere in the world listening to music and living the music. Sometimes dancing, sometimes crying, sometimes laughing. We choose this ad as it’s a really diverse advertising involving people from a lot of different communities around the world as well as African Americans. Also, all the African Americans and Black people involved in this ad are either dancing or working out, we thought it would be interested to know our sample’s feeling about
how their community is portrayed in this spot. After having insights coming from an ad involving white people only we thought that having insights from another ad which is really diverse will result into interesting data to compare.

Figure 10: Apple Music - Apple Music Beat 1 - (released on June 30, 2015)
Available to watch here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NUC6UQ-Dvg

OLD SPICE (CF APPENDIX 5)

The third advertising we chose is a 30-second spot, entitled “Windsurfing,” is a part of an advertising campaign involving several ads which pit the two spokesmen against each other as representatives of fragrances Bearglove and Timber. It begins with Mustafa in a bathroom and a voice-over: “Warning, ignore all Old Spice commercials except this one.” Crews come crashing through the set and from there things just get more surreal and self-referential. He tells Mustafa that this is his commercial, but Isaiah provides strong evidence to the contrary. This advertising involves two muscled African American actors, half naked and yelling. We found interesting to get insight from our sample about how those two African Americans are portrayed and if they can identify themselves with them.
The last advertising we selected is from the fast food brand Mc Donald’s which is trying to reach the African American Y generation by an integrated marketing campaign called “365 Black”. The spot “Good Things” is one of them. The message of this ad is “You spread love where you live” and involved African American of the Y generation only. They are in the street, by night, drawing graffiti on walls. McDonald’s being a brand who tried to reach the African American community since decades, we found interesting to get insights on what our sample thinks about this advertising. Are African Americans hanging out on a street and graphing walls a proper representation of the African American youth? Do they identify themselves with the characters involved in this ad?
3.2.4. SAMPLING

3.2.4.1. RESEARCH SAMPLE

As previously mentioned, we chose Las Vegas as a place to conduct our research because, being one if not the most advertised city in the world, its inhabitants are constantly exposed even over exposed to visual messages. We are hoping to get deeper insights thanks to this over exposition.

In Las Vegas, we chose UNLV, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, as a place to conduct the quantitative survey because UNLV is one of the nation’s most diverse campuses for undergraduate students, according to the 2013 U.S. News & World Report best colleges rankings. We thought that collecting data in a diverse environment will help to get deeper insight regarding our topic.

We chose as our population the UNLV (University of Nevada, Las Vegas) African American undergraduate students that being 1,814 people (8% of the students of UNLV). Consequently, with a population of 1,814 African American Undergraduate students, a 5% margin of error and 95% of confident level, the required sample size is 300. We'll then administrate the online survey to 300 UNLV African American undergraduate students.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS, PROCEDURES & DATA ANALYSIS

We used Google Form as a tool to create the survey, collect and analyze the data. Reaching our sample wasn’t easy as not being enrolled at UNLV. I had to reach each African American and black organizations on campus to get the president of each organization spreading my survey to their members and be able to collect the 300 answers needed.

We contacted numerous black fraternities and sororities:

- Alpha Phi Alpha
- Eta Chi
- Iota Phi Theta Fraternity Inc
- Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc
- Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc
- Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.
- Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc.
- Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc.
- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc
- Kappa Sigma
But also several organizations and department on campus:

- UNLV Marketing Department
- UNLV Media Relations
- UNLV African American Student Association of Theater & Film
- UNLV Black Student Organization
- UNLV African American Studies Department

We also spent a week on campus to meet the students and be able to collect answers thanks to our IPad and use social media to spread our survey to the different groups and pages mentioned above.

3.4.1. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

In order to analyze the data collected from our survey we’ll use the graphic and diagram furnished by Google Form and then compare those. We’ll first analyze the attitudes of our sample towards advertising in general and the way the feel about African American being properly portrayed or not and then compare the results with the data collected from the viewing of advertising spots that we chose. The goal here is to know if how they think they perceive advertising in general match with their answer when they are actually confronted to a specific spot.

3.5 RESEARCH ETHICS

We needed to be really careful about the way to introduce our research to the participants of the online survey. Being a white girl analyzing a black population, I don’t want to appear intrusive. I don’t want their opinion to be biased. I need honesty and spontaneity to get interesting and efficient results.

3.6 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The major limitation that we had to face while conducted this research was the restricted time available to conduct this research. Being a full-time employee (45 hours a week minimum) and having to write a dissertation meanwhile is challenging as of the limited amount of time off available. We would be able to carry out qualitative analyses in a sufficient number to be relevant to our study and it would have been more deepen. We also encountered difficulty accessing the sample emails. Being not enrolled in UNLV was definitely a difficulty as the UNLV administration didn’t want to share students information. Hopefully Black and African American organizations on campus were willing to help but still reaching 300 answers was challenging as student received so many emails and survey already that they often didn’t want to spend time to do ours.
The other main limitation we face was the use of the survey. How to be sure that students actually think before answering and didn’t answer randomly? Also, we included four videos in our survey, which is a lot, did students really look at them before answering the questions? This can definitely alter our results.
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS/FINDINGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The researcher sent the survey online and collected 300 answered from 300 African Americans undergraduate students enrolled at UNLV (University of Nevada, Las Vegas). Among them, 139 were male and 161 were female. 21 of them were between 15 and 17 years old, 229 were between 18 and 24 years old and 50 of them were between 25 and 36 years old.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE/ETHNICITY</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-17 years old</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 years old</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-36 years old</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate students at UNLV</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Demographics of the people surveyed for this research

The researcher will now analyze the results collected from the survey following which research objectives previously stated.

4.2. UNDERSTANDING HOW THE UNLV AFRICAN AMERICAN OF THE Y GENERATION VIEW THE ROLE OF ADVERTISING AND HOW THEY “CONSUME” IT.

4.2.1. RESPONSE TO ADVERTISING & CONSUMPTION
The African American of the Y Generation in UNLV tend to respond positively to advertising in general. According to the results of our survey, 77.3% of the respondents said they like advertising while 22.7% dislike it. Out of the 300 participants, 133 (44.3%) strongly agree and 123 (41%) agree to the statement "I like to look at most advertising that I am exposed to", while only 36 (12%) disagree and 8 (2.7%) strongly disagree with it. 127 (42.3%) of them agree to the statement "I think advertising is entertaining" and 158 (52.7%) of the respondents disagree with the statement "I think advertising is annoying."

![Figure 13: UNLV African American of the Y Generation's attitudes toward advertising](image)

4.2.2 INFORMATION INCLUDED IN ADVERTISING AND CREDIBILITY

The African American of the Y Generation in UNLV tend to rely on advertising as a tool of information. While asking to finish the sentence "I think that advertising is informative because..." 54.7% (164) of the respondents chose the statement "I become aware of new trends thanks to advertising" and 32.3% (97) chose "I become aware of new products thanks to advertising". Only 13% (39) of them selected the assertions "I don’t think advertising is informative".

Regarding the credibility of advertising, we asked our sample to finish the sentence "I think advertising is credible because..." More than half of our survey population (56.3%) chose the statement "The information included are reliable" while 14.3% (43) of them chose "It reflect the reality". 29.3% of the respondents chose "I don’t think advertising is credible".

4.3 UNDERSTANDING HOW ADVERTISING SPOTS AFFECTS THE CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF UNLV AFRICAN AMERICAN Y GENERATION.

4.3.1 ADVERTISING, LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE AND PURCHASE DECISION

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being "very confident" and 5 being "Not confident at all"), we asked our sample, how confident they generally feel using information they see on an advertising to make a purchase decision. 58.7% (179) of the respondents answered "2" and 24.7% (74) chose the number "3". When asking how often they use advertising to help make a purchase decision, on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being "Always", 5 being "Never"), 49.3% (148) chose the number "2" and 34% (102) of them, selected the number "3".
4.3.2. ADVERTISING, Y AFRICAN AMERICANS AND PURCHASE DECISION

We also asked the respondents, on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being “Absolutely” and 5 being “Not at all”), if they were more likely to make a purchase when the advertisements included African Americans. 48% (144) of them answered “2”, which is a pretty high score. However, while analyzing the results obtained for each ad watched, the findings don’t correlate. In the case of Extra Gum advertising (The story of Sara and Juan) mainly all the actors included are white. When the question “Would you buy the product?” is asked, on a scale to 1 to 5 (1 being “I am going right now!” and 5 being “No I won’t”), 41.7% (125) of the respondents chose the number 2. Looking for the results obtained to the same question for the Old Spice and McDonald’s advertisements, both involving African American actors only, 58% (174) of the respondents answered “5”, (being “Not at all”), and 50.7% (152) of them chose the number “4” in the case of McDonald’s advertising. UNLV African American of the Y Generation might think that, in a general way, they are more likely to buy a product when its advertisement involved actors from the same community but when they are actually confronted to an ad, their attitudes differ.

![Bar chart showing the likelihood of making a purchase when the advertisements have African-American people included.](chart1.png)

![Bar chart showing responses to the question “Would you buy the product?”](chart2.png)
Figure 14: Purchase decision and skin colors in selected advertising spots

4.4. EXPLORING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN OF THE Y GENERATION’S PERCEPTION OF HOW THEY ARE MARKETED TO BY DETERMINING IF THEY ARE PROPERLY PORTRAYED IN ADVERTISING
4.4.1. SAMPLE’S GENERAL PERCEPTION OF HOW AFRICAN AMERICANS ARE PORTRAYED IN ADVERTISING

If their attitudes differ regarding their intentions to purchase after the viewing of an advertising, it mainly depends on the perception that they actually have from this specific spot, its story, and how African American are portrayed in the spot. 49.3% (148) of our respondents said being often racially offended by advertising in general and 41.3% (124) said being sometimes racially offended by advertising. Out of 300 respondents, 145 (48.3%) of them agreed to the fact that the African American community is not portrayed properly in most advertising and 50.3% (151) of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement “I don’t think marketers know and understand the African American culture.” When asking to rate their level of agreement with three different statements, 45.3% (136) of the participants agreed with the statement “I am more likely to like advertising involving African American actors. 72.3% (217) of them agreed with the assertion “I am more like likely to watch advertising involving African American actors”. Finally, (155) 51.7% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement “I pay more attention to advertising involving African Americans”. Culturally relevant advertising still matters for UNLV African American of the Y generation. More than half of our survey population (57%) would like to see more African American in advertising, but the results also differ while looking closer to the results collected from the viewing of the 5 spots selected and previously mentioned.

4.4.2. PRACTICAL CASE: SAMPLE’S PERCEPTION OF SPECIFIC ADVERTISING SPOTS

In the case of the Extra Gum advertising (The Story of Sara & Juan), 48% (144) of the respondents answered “2” when asking if they liked this ad (1 being “I loved it” , 5 being “Not at all”) and 56% (168) of them said that they can identify themselves with a character of the advertising, even though all the characters involved are whites. 51% (155) of them reported that this advertising touched them and 59% reported that they would not feel more attracted by the ad if the characters were African Americans.

Please answer to the following statements whether you agree or not.

![Figure 15: Extra Gum advertising - identification and attraction](image)

Regarding Apple Music advertising case, 46.7% of the participants liked the spot as they chose to answer “1” out of 5 (1 being “I loved it!”, 5 being “Not at all”) when asking to evaluate their appreciation of it. 52.3% (157) can identify themselves with a character of the ad while only 18% (54) of the participants think that more African Americans should be involved for them to feel targeted. 64% (192) of the respondents think that the African Americans involved in this ad are well portrayed and 53.7% (161) said that they wouldn’t pay more attention to the ad if all the characters were African Americans.
In the case of Old Spice advertising which involved African American actors only, 56% (168) of the respondents didn’t like the advertising at all and 59% (177) of them reported that they cannot identify themselves with one of the characters in the ad. According to 42.7% (128) of surveyed population this advertising stigmatizes the African Americans and Black population in general, 29% (87) think that this advertising is cliché and 26% believe that it spread a wrong image of the African American Community. All together and as multiple answers were allowed for this question, out of the 434 total answers for this question, 293 answers chosen disagree with the way African Americans are portrayed in this spot.

Regarding McDonald’s advertising spot 47.7% (143) of the respondents answered “4” when asking if they liked this ad (1 being “I am Lovin’it!”, 5 being “Not at all”) and 49.3% (148) also selected “4” when asking if they can identify themselves with one of the characters of the ad (1 being “Definitely”, 5 being “No”). 19% (57) of the respondents think that this ad does not reflect properly the African American Community, 28.7% (86) of them think that it stereotypes the African American Community, 50.3% (151) believe that this ad is cliché and 52% (156) think that it spread a wrong image of African American youth. All together, for this multiple choice question, these results reveal that, out of 526 total answers, 450 of the statements chosen disagree with the way African Americans are portrayed in this advertising.

4.4.3. AFRICAN AMERICANS AND DIVERSITY

As the researcher analyzed the results collected from the survey, it brings a particular interest in diversity. When asking to evaluate the sample’s level of agreement with the statement “I think diversity in advertising is important”, 57.3% (172) of the participants strongly agreed and 33.3% (100) agreed. That being 272 out of 300 people being pro diversity in advertising. In the same way, 69% (177) of the respondents strongly agree with the statement “Race doesn’t make any difference to me in advertising”. Also, in the practical case of the viewing of advertisements, we asked the sample what was their feeling about the characters in the story of Sara and Juan being all white, 44% (132) don’t mind and 25.3% didn’t really noticed it. After the viewing of the Apple Music ad, we asked our sample if they liked the diversity of the actors involved in the ad. 58.7% (176) of the participants strongly agreed and 27.7% (83) agreed.
4.5. EXPLORING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN OF THE Y GENERATION’S PERCEPTION OF WHICH INDUSTRIES, BRANDS OR COMPANIES PORTRAY THEM PROPERLY AND WHY.

We collected 408 answers for the question "What are the first three brands that comes to mind when you think of African American being properly portrayed and represented in advertising?" Below is a summary of the answers collected and classified by industries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY CITED</th>
<th>NUMBER OF ANSWERS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF THE ANSWERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car Industry</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing Industry - Sport</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>30.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing Industry</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty &amp; Cosmetics Industry</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>19.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage Industry</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>25.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media &amp; Broadcasting Industry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Industry</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Industry</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking Industry</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ANSWERS</strong></td>
<td><strong>408</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to our results the Sport clothing industry is the one which portrayed and represent the best the African American population, gathering 30.14% of the answers. Among those, the brand Nike had been cited 51 times and the brand Jordan, which belongs to Nike’s group, had been cited 13 times, representing 64 answers out of the 408 collected in favor of Nike. Adidas had been mentioned 37 times, JD 5 times, and Foot Locker 4 times.

Food and beverage are the second industry who portrayed and represent African Americans properly. With 105 answers, being 25.73% of the answers collected dealing with brands of the food and beverage industry. Surprisingly, the most cited brand is McDonald’s, mentioned 46 times. The brand Milk, mentioned 10 times, attracted our interest as one of the respondents mentioned Naomi Campbell in parenthesis beside the name of the brand. In the 90s, she paused for the brand with a mustache of milk.

The Beauty and cosmetics industry is the third on the list of the industry who best portray and represent the African American community, being 19.85% of the answers collected. Among multinationals, L’Oreal was mentioned 20 times. Dove, 12 times. MAC Cosmetics, 11 times and Maybelline 9 times. The three other brands mentioned: Dark and lovely, Black Radiance, and Manetabolism are brands focusing on Black and African Americans only.

The last one the researcher will talk about is the Technology industry, mentioned 34 times being 8.33% of the total answers for this open-ended question. Apple had been cited 9 times and Google 7 times. Beats by Dr. Dre and Bose also had been mentioned 7 times and those brands usually use celebrity endorsement as involving Snoop Dogg or Pharell Williams in their ads. Also and just
like in the case of the brand Milk and Naomi Campbell, the person who mention the bank Chase as an answer also wrote Serena Williams beside the brand name. Both are interesting insights regarding how interesting and how attracting is celebrity endorsement for African Americans.

4.5.1. THE REASONS WHY.

![Figure 17: Reasons why brands portrayed the African American properly](image)

When asking to our sample how and why do they think that those brands portrayed the African American properly, 71.7% (215) of the respondents answered that their advertising campaigns use African American codes, tones and expressions. 54% (162) of them answered that they are using African American actors in their advertising and 35.3% (106) of them answered that they are using African American celebrities in their advertising.

4.6. EXPLORING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN OF THE Y GENERATION’S PERCEPTION OF WHICH INDUSTRIES, BRANDS OR COMPANIES STIGMATIZE THEM AND WHY.

The researcher collected 450 answers for the question “What are the first three brands that comes to mind when you think of African American stigmatization in advertising?” Below is a summary of the answers collected and classified by industries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY CITED</th>
<th>NUMBER OF ANSWERS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF THE ANSWERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luxury Industry</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>33.11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clothing Industry</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>13.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty &amp; Cosmetics Industry</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>16.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage Industry</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>21.63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to our results the Luxury industry is the one which stigmatizes African Americans the most. Out of 453 answers to this open ended question, 33.11% being 150 of them mentioned the Luxury industry as being bad to portray properly the African American community. The group LVMH (85), Dior (22), Michael Kors (21) and Chanel (15) had been mentioned.

The researcher were surprised to find the same industries for both questions. In fact, The Food and beverage industry hold the second position, with 98 (21.63%) mentions. The band cited are obviously different than the one cited as not portraying the African Americans properly, except one, McDonald’s, which with 52 mentions remains one of the brand which not portrayed the African Americans properly. How can a brand be cited in being good at portraying African Americans and being bad as portraying African Americans? It is again a matter of perception, and which specific advertising our sample had in mind while mentioning this brand.

The Beauty and cosmetics industry hold the third position. The brands Old Spice has been mentioned 43 times, proof that the perception that our sample had of the Old Spice advertising spots that we showed is not specific to this spot but to the overall advertising campaigns that the brand chose to broadcast. Revlon (18) and Lynx (9) had also been cited.

The clothing industry had also been cited as broadcasting a wrong image of African Americans with 13.90% of the answers. Abercrombie had often been mentioned, 30 times exactly. The cigarette industry, the Media and broadcasting industry and the music industry had been mentioned, but only by a few respondents, not enough for the researcher to draw conclusions.

4.6.1. THE REASONS WHY.
When asking to our sample how and why do they think that those brands portrayed the African American improperly, 63.3% (190) of the respondents answered that those brands tried to reach the African Americans but have no idea of what the African American culture and lifestyle is. 57% (171) of them think that their advertising campaigns do not reflect the African American population and culture. 22% (66) of the participants believe that these brands spread a negative image of the African American community and the 20.3% (61) remaining think that these brands don’t want African Americans as customers.

4.7. CONCLUSION

The researcher surveyed 300 UNLV African American undergraduate students for this research. The results proved that this population respond positively to advertising and like it in general, but still don’t feel well portrayed as African Americans in advertising in general. Our sample said being more attracted and being more willing to like, watch or pay attention to an ad when African American are involved but while they are actually confronted to advertising, in a practical case, their answer showed that the skin colors of the actors involved in an ad don’t really matter anymore. They can like an ad and identify themselves to a character easily whatever the characters are white, Asians or African Americans... Even the purchase decision does not change. They said being more willing to buy a product if the ad includes African Americans, but the truth is, according to the results collected after the viewing of 5 different advertising spots, sometimes involving white only, sometimes Black and African Americans only, sometimes being really diverse, we noticed that the main reason why the participants wouldn’t buy the product broadcast in the ad is because they didn’t like the ad. And the main reason why they didn’t like an ad is because African Americans were stigmatized and not portrayed properly. Cultural identity still matter for this population, but diversity is becoming as important. Our sample showed a strong interest for diversity in general and for specific advertising spots. They showed that races don’t make any difference for them in advertising. The African American population, thanks to this new generation, might be in a period of transition as of how they perceive advertising.
CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION

5.1 INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

The researcher noticed a gap between what the surveyed population think of what actually is their perception of advertising and how they actually perceived it when they are confronted to specific advertising spots. In a general way, our sample like advertising and watch most of the advertising they are exposed to. These insights confirms E.T. Franklin’s findings (2014) which says that African American tend to respond positively to advertising. But by and large, our respondents do not feel culturally represented in the advertising industry. The messages they receive from brands often do not reflect their lives and have little connection with how they spend their buying power. They feel like marketers don’t know them, doesn’t understand their culture or worst don’t want them as customers. These insights also confirms E.T. Franklin’s findings (2014) which says that African Americans don’t feel valued and acknowledged by marketers.

It also appeared that they are more likely to watch, like and pay attention to a spot involving African Americans. That confirms Nielsen’s findings (2012) which says that African American look for content that reflects their lives, the lives of people like them, their culture and their values. Along the research for the literature review, we noticed that, according to Time Warner “Multicultural Media Consumer Study” by Cheskin Added Value, African Americans are more likely than other groups to use media to mirror their racial identity as they search for “characters that look like me to connect with (in) a show or movie.” Our sample answered first that they want to see more African Americans in advertising spots, but when confronted to a spot involving white character only, they liked the spot and were able to identify themselves this characters. They also answered that they wouldn’t be more attracted by the spot if the character were African American. However, while confronted to two different spots involving African Americans only, the majority disliked both spots and answered that both were stigmatizing their community. For those two ads, most of the respondents say they weren’t able to identify themselves with a character of the ads, even though all of them were African Americans and “look like them”. The researcher then draws the conclusion that, the sample’s perception of an ad has only a little to do with skin colors, but mainly with the way African American are portrayed if included in the ad.

Since their cultural identity is strong, their answers support the African American community when questions were asked about their general attitudes and expectations regarding advertising, but the reality of how they perceive a spot is different. Even though our sample answered that they are more likely to make a purchase when the advertisements have African American people included, a spot including wrong interpretations of them, which stigmatize them, definitely affect their appreciation of the ad as well as their intention to buy the product. Intentions, which were reduced to zero when the community is not portrayed properly. Those findings confirm but also moderate the Nielsen report’s findings (2014) which says that African Americans are more likely to make a purchase when the advertisements have African-American people included and they are also more likely to purchase or support products that are owned or supported by African-Americans. The nuance is that purchase intention largely depends on how the brand portrayed African Americans in its advertising campaigns.
The researcher noticed a huge interest from our sample for diversity. Most of them think that race doesn’t matter to them in advertising. It confirms and emphasizes Nielsen’s finding from both 2012 and 2014 reports which respectively said that ethnic recognition is important for African Americans and that they identify with diversity more today than ever. It also said that they strongly desire media to represent different ethnic and racial perspectives as well as diversity among African Americans (Nielsen, 2012). The huge amount of pro diversity answers collected from our sample match with Erickson’s finding regarding the Y Generation, which assert that this generation is the most culturally and ethnically diverse generation.

5.2. IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The researcher strongly believes that the African American perception of advertising is changing along with generations. Even though the new generation still doesn’t feel acknowledged and understood by marketers they are way more open and willing to like and identify themselves to advertising involving other ethnicities than the previous generations. Marketers need to understand that the new generation, which is pro-diversity still disagree with the way African Americans are portrayed, but strongly liked spots which involved more than one ethnicity.

To answer our research question “What is the perception that the UNLV African Americans undergraduate students have of advertising spots?” We can say that, just like their parents, they respond positively to advertising, but don’t feel acknowledged and valued as customers. According to them, marketers don’t know them, don’t understand their culture and most of the time, stigmatize them and spread a wrong image of their community. However, even if their cultural identity remains strong, they are way more willing to like, watch and pay attention to diverse advertising than the previous generation. They can identify with characters of other ethnicities easily, but react really strongly to advertising, broadcasting a wrong image of their community. Even being a part of the Y Generation, which is supposed to be hard to keep focus on advertising, our sample respond positively to advertising. They think about it as including reliable and credible information and they like to look at most advertisements they are exposed to.

So how to resolve this problem of non acknowledgement which remains through generations? Our sample expressed that some of the brands in the clothing industry, the food and beverage industry or the beauty and cosmetics industry portrayed their community properly. Their reasons why is, first of all, because their advertisements use African American codes, being tone of the voice, expressions... Secondly, because they are using African Americans actors in their advertising and finally because they are using African American celebrity endorsement. In other words, they want marketers to reflect their culture.

5.2.1. THE TOTAL MARKET STRATEGY - A SOLUTION?

Marketing to African American should be based on the same principles as marketing to any other group. That is, the market should be analyzed carefully, relevant needs should be identified among one or more segments of the market, and the entire
marketing mix should be designed to meet the needs of the target segments. A common mistake when communicating with any ethnic group is to assume that its members are the same as the larger culture except for superficial differences (McGraw-Hill, 2009). Total Market Strategy means integrating African Americans into every step of a business planning process – from strategy development, to research, to product development, to packaging design, to creative briefs, to media planning, all the way to in-store execution (Univision, 2015). In the past, African Americans were seen as a separate market. But now, companies are beginning to see African Americans through a new lens and have recognized that they are part of the “General Market.” A brand should stand for the same equity in consumers’ minds, be they African Americans or not. However, if category penetration, brand awareness, habits or practices are different between African Americans and non-African American consumers, marketers need to consider a different communication strategy.

Total Market Strategy suggests that a media plan be reflective of the African American contribution to a company overall sales. So, if 18% of the sales come from African Americans, 18% of your marketing budget should be devoted to reaching this consumer. Consequently and as we previously mentioned “If consumption patterns dictated a company’s advertising budget,” Nielsen (2014) reported, “then advertisers should be spending proportionately with African-American media as follows: 44 percent higher spend on education and career Web sites, 38 percent higher spend on streaming Web sites, 37 percent higher spend on television (with a special emphasis on cable), and 15 percent higher spend on mobile phone advertising.”

Additionally, consistently supporting the African American messaging is essential to building a long-term relationship with these valuable consumers. What is still happening most frequently in the industry is that brands do all their foundational research focused on the so-called general market, which in reality means the non-Hispanic white consumer. (Burgos, 2014) Based on the insights that they uncover in this research, they develop a new product or service, put together a robust marketing program and decide on main commercial strategies. It is only at the end of that process that they call their multicultural agency partners and ask them to adapt everything to specific ethnic segments, most likely Hispanics, and occasionally African Americans. This approach is not only inefficient, but also likely to lead to less than optimal results. What Burgos (2014) has found to be more effective and efficient is to incorporate the ethnic perspective early on in a brand’s foundational research. Doing so allows marketers to: (a) understand the real role of race or ethnicity within the context of all other human dimensions, like life stage, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, etc.; (b) identify insights that are relevant across segments; and (c) uncover nuances that are unique to specific groups. This knowledge becomes vital not only in the development of a brand’s core strategy, but also in the implementation of tactical consumer and shopper initiatives down the road.

5.3. CONTRIBUTION TO THE AREA OF RESEARCH

The research contributes to the current body of knowledge by adding insights and analyzes from the African American Y generation and their attitudes regarding advertising. No such research has been done before and getting an understanding of their perception of advertising will help to understand the overall African American culture and the way they deal with advertising. This study should help marketers to better apprehend this powerful segment and better target them as well as
benefiting from their buying power. Marketers need to fill the existing disconnection which exist between African American and Marketing.

Even though the situation has evolved in a way, the newer generation still don’t feel acknowledged by marketers. The researcher is hoping that bringing an up-to-date study dealing with the younger generation to the current body of knowledge will help marketers to realize that the situation didn’t change that much in years and they need to react and find a solution for everyone to feel properly portrayed by advertising. It will benefit to the society, but also to the marketers themselves who will earn from this powerful segment if marketed properly.

5.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The researcher puts her time and her best efforts to make this research as accurate as possible. However, like for each research, there are limitations.

The study rests upon a survey which could lead to unclear data because certain answer options may be interpreted differently by respondents. They may not be fully aware of their reasons for any given answer because of lack of memory on the subject, or even boredom. The survey (Appendix I - cf pdf) included videos, respondents could decide not to watch the video and then the answer related to the video wouldn’t be accurate. But, we chose the only survey as a quantitative research method because numerous questions can be asked about a subject, giving extensive flexibility in data analysis. A broad range of data can be collected (e.g., attitudes, opinions, beliefs, values, behavior, factual). It’s a tool capable of collecting data from a large number of respondents and it can be administered remotely.

Adding a qualitative research method would have been more efficient regarding the analysis and the reliability of the results. However, the time allocated to this research was too restricted to be able to fully operate the research on both qualitative and quantitative collections of data. Interviews and focus group would bring an insight different, more personal to the restricted amount of people participating. It could entail to drawing general conclusions based on the opinion of a non representative amount of persons. The researcher preferred to focus on quantitative data only as a willingness to speak out for a bigger amount, trying to better understand what our sample think, by numbers and quantity of answers. However, we encourage future researchers to think about adapting the question asked in the survey interviews and focus groups and then compare the results obtained.
CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSION

Culture is a learned and shared system of meanings which alter the perception that we can have on the surrounding environment. Perception is the process by which an individual selects, organizes, and interprets the stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. If the stimuli are advertising, there are key determinants influencing the consumer perception of it: credibility, confidence in advertising in general, a mood, but those determinants are different depending on cultures. Culture affects the perception of emotions, of the environment, the aesthetic preferences, but also someone’s sensory and self esteem.

The African American perception of advertising had been the subject of numerous previous research. Number of them assert that even being receptive to media in general, cultural identity is strong for African Americans. They like culturally relevant advertising, but don’t feel acknowledged in an industry where low investments are dedicated to target them. We noticed a lack of research regarding the African American of the Y generation. Knowing that it’s a tech savvy generation which has a strong buying power and which are hard to keep focused on, the researcher wanted to understand their perception of advertising. Providing an up-to-date study, confirming or bringing into question the previous findings, whether or not it’s still accurate for the new generation, will definitely help the industry better understand this target market.

Our research question being "What is the perception that UNLV African American undergraduate students have of advertising spots?", the researcher spread an online survey to 300 African Americans of the Y generation and enrolled at UNLV. The results collected confirm that our sample is open to advertising and respond positively. They appreciate watching it while exposed to and think that advertising is actually entertaining. To them, advertising is a tool of information which is credible and let them aware of new trends and products. Those findings answered our first objective which aims to understand how our chosen population view the role of advertising and how they consume it.

An African American of the Y generation is more likely to make a purchase when the advertising includes African Americans. However, they are reluctant to buy a product if the advertising does not reflect their ethnicity properly. Those findings answered our second objective which is to know how advertising spots affect the consumer buying behavior of our chosen population.

While exploring the African American of the Y generation of how they are marketed to by determining if they are properly portrayed in advertising, which is the third objective of this research, the researcher noticed that the sample population doesn’t feel acknowledged by advertising and still often feel racially offended by advertising. According to them the African American community is not portrayed properly. They would like to see more African Americans in advertising and are more likely to like, watch and pay attention to an ad including African Americans. However, while exploring those results, we noticed a keen interest from our sample to diversity. Most of them said that race doesn’t make any difference from them in advertising. They can easily identify with a character in an ad which belongs to a different culture and ethnicity that theirs.

The two last objectives aimed to know which brands or industries portrayed the African American and which one don’t. Respondents chose the sports clothing industry to be the one who portrayed the best their community. Brands like Nike or Adidas had been mentioned. The food and beverage industry holds the second place with brands like McDonald’s and Milk. The beauty and
cosmetic one and the technological one are following. According to our target, the main reasons why those brands represent the African American properly is because their advertising campaigns use African Americans codes, tones and expressions but also African Americans actors and celebrity endorsement. Naomi Campbell had been mentioned for example. In the case of the brands and industries which portrayed the African American population improperly, the luxury industry is on the top. Brands like Dior, the group LVMH and Chanel has been cited. The food and beverage hold the second position. McDonald's had been mentioned as both a brand who portrayed properly and improperly the African American population. Again, it's a matter of perception and interpretation. The clothing industry with brand like Abercrombie is following. When asking how and why these brands and industries portrayed the African Americans improperly, the results assert they don't know the African American culture and doesn't reflect it. They spread a wrong image of the African Americans.

To conclude, the researcher believes that the Y generation is in a transition phase. Even if their cultural identity is still strong, then more than ever open to others and to diversity and marketers needs to understand their thoughts to feel the current disconnection. This research is important as it provides an up-to-date view of advertising from a powerful segment. We aim to help the industry to react and better target them, through the total market approach, for example, and at the end benefits from them.

As of future research, the researcher recommend to conduct a qualitative analysis to complete and deepen the results collected as well as researching the industries and brands operating with the total market approach, have the same sample watch their advertising and evaluate their perception to notice any improvement. Marketers need to understand the necessity to use the total market approach in this multicultural society. They have to considerate the creation of the marketing mix and invest more for this growing target in a way that it can be representatives of the African American consumption.

The United Stated of America is a multicultural society which challenges marketers as of properly targeting each culture and subculture. There is still some work to be done regarding the representation of African American in the industry, but are marketers failing with any other ethnic segment? How Asian, Hispanics, Latinos and the other ethnics of the Y generation which compose the U.S feel about advertising?


Hall, Edward T. 1976, Beyond culture / Edward T. Hall Anchor Press Garden City, N.Y


APPENDIX

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AFRICAN AMERICAN OF THE Y GENERATION’S PERCEPTION OF ADVERTISING SPOTS - SURVEY & RESULTS

CF.PDF ATTACHED
APPENDIX 2

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## APPENDIX 6

**SURVEY RESULTS - BRANDS AND INDUSTRIES WHICH PORTRAY THE AFRICAN AMERICAN ETHNICITY PROPERLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY AND BRANDS CITED</th>
<th>NUMBER OF ANSWERS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF THE ANSWERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAR INDUSTRY</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ford</td>
<td>12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Toyota</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Buick</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CLOTHING INDUSTRY</strong></td>
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<td>- H&amp;M</td>
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<td>- Macy's</td>
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<td>- United Colors of Benetton</td>
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<td><strong>CLOTHING INDUSTRY - SPORT</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BEAUTY &amp; COSMETICS</strong></td>
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<td>L’Oreal</td>
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<td>Dark and lovely</td>
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<td>Cherrios</td>
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<td>Google</td>
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<td>Beats by Dr. Dre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verizon</td>
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<td>TRAVEL</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Airlines</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Airlines</td>
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<td>BANK</td>
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<td>Chase</td>
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<td>Bank of America</td>
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<td>TOTAL ANSWERS</td>
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APPENDIX 6

SURVEY RESULTS - BRANDS AND INDUSTRIES WHICH DON’T PORTRAYED THE AFRICAN AMERICAN ETHNICITY PROPERLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY AND BRANDS CITED</th>
<th>NUMBER OF ANSWERS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF THE ANSWERS</th>
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<td>Luxury Industry</td>
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<td>Dior</td>
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<td>Chanel</td>
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<td>LVMH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Kors</td>
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<td>Ralph Lauren</td>
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<td>Tiffany &amp; Co</td>
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<td>Clothing Industry</td>
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<td>13.90%</td>
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<td>Abercrombie</td>
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<td>Tommy Hilfiger</td>
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<td>Beauty and Cosmetics Industry</td>
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<td>Lynx</td>
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<td>Food &amp; Beverage</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL ANSWERS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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APPENDIX 8

REFLECTION

My overall experience as a master’s student at the Dublin Business School was enlightening, on a cultural level as well as on a school perspective. I enjoyed the classes and lectures and was happy to discover the Irish culture (as well as the Spanish, Brazilian and Indian one). I was a bit upset to ended up in a class where 24 out of 30 students are French as I chose this experience to be immersed again in a new culture. I expected an experience more multicultural in school than what we had. But still, after a year in the United States, having an eight months experience in Dublin consolidate my willingness to see the world and discover more cultures. That’s why I chose to be back in the U.S for another year.

On a school perspective it was nice to be able to actually interact with the lecturers. I was enrolled in Winthrop University, SC, USA, two years ago and my English skills was way poorer that now. I was unable to participate in class and had to focus deeply to understand the class. The Dublin Business School allows me to notice how much I progress in English. I know I still have a lot to learn, but I am trying everyday to be better.

Writing this dissertation had been one of the most challenging project I’ve ever done. First because my position of Communications assistant/ Graphic Designer in Exotics Racing Las Vegas, driving experience world leader, took me a lot of time in which I couldn’t work on it. Plus, having to combine a full time job with a dissertation had been difficult and I really had to challenge myself to seat at my computer after my shift and study. It also stressed me out a lot as, even by working at nights and during the weekends for months, I was afraid not to make it on time and worse, fail. I noticed that it’s hard to keep focusing on a school project once I began to work and make money out of it.

The most difficult part was reaching out my sample. Being not from Las Vegas so having only a few connections and not being enrolled at UNLV definitely slow down my work schedule. I was able to make it by emailing a lot of people from the university, trying everyone willing to help me and I am glad it worked.

Also, being far from my classmate was a difficulty. We used to help each other a lot and it’s hard to compose alone without a friend to compare my work to. We tried to reach each other out sometimes but the nine hours jetlag wasn’t helping. It was also very frustrating to work on this dissertation being in another country. I just wanted to experience Vegas and the surrounding, enjoying my trip and make the most of every minute. Not being able to do it to be able to finish this dissertation on time was upsetting honestly. But I am glad I made it once. Now I really hope that I am going to pass to graduate and be done with school for a while.