

11. Jessica Sica-Lieber (Prof. Bruce Austin) Advertising & Public Relations

Jessica Sica-Lieber's Senior Thesis in Communication is a sophisticated study of Baby Boomers and Gen Y's consumer motivations. Jessica's work for her thesis was initiated in the Department's Quantitative Research Methods class, one of two required communication research methods courses for Advertising & Public Relations majors. Jessica's thesis is a model for scientific clarity and precision. Her thesis creatively and successfully weaves together mass communications theoretical constructs to form an ambitious survey research project. Her text engages the reader, convincingly demonstrates the research project's significance, and offers an incisive and thoughtful summary of previous research. Jessica clearly articulates her research procedures and reports her study's extensive findings. She appropriately acknowledges methodological limitations and specifies her study's heuristic dimensions. Jessica's work and her writing are first-rate. She will present her research on 18 April at the Department's fifth annual Conference for Undergraduate Research in Communication and a condensed version of her thesis will be published in the Proceedings book that accompanies that Conference.

The Rochester Institute of Technology

Department of Communication

Just Like Their Parents?

A comparative study of automobile purchase motivations for two age-cohorts:
Generation Y and the Baby Boomers

By

Jessica Sica-Lieber

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The members of the Committee approve the thesis of Jessica Sica-Lieber presented on
February 15, 2008.

Dr. Bruce Austin
Professor Directing Thesis

Dr. David Neumann
Thesis Advisor

Dr. Bruce Austin
Department Chair

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JUST LIKE THEIR PARENTS?

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AUTOMOBILE PURCHASE MOTIVATIONS FOR TWO AGE-COHORTS: GENERATION Y AND THE BABY BOOMERS

Jessica Sica-Lieber
Department of Communication
Dr. Bruce Austin
B.S. Advertising & Public Relations
Winter Quarter, 072

Generation Y (Gen Y), the second largest generation to date and children of the infamous Baby Boomers, has presented a challenge to marketers, especially with "big-ticket" items requiring a great amount of thought and monetary commitment. When efforts to attract this advertising-adverse generation to new auto models were not successful, one car manufacturer decided to confront the challenge head on by creating an entire car line designed to grab the attention of the young auto market. Launched in 2003, Scion was the first car line created specifically to appeal to Gen Y but ultimately ended up attracting the Baby Boomer generation as well. Using an online, self-report survey administered to students and faculty/staff at the Rochester Institute of Technology, this study compares automobile purchase motivations and advertising media preferences between Generation Y and the Baby Boomers. The findings suggest that while both generations possess similar purchase motivations for automobiles, Baby Boomers are more apt to use their automobile as a status symbol. The results further indicate that while both generations prefer to control how they receive advertising messages, Generation Y has an overall more agreeable attitude to advertising than Baby Boomers. The author suggests future research to clarify several issues identified in this study.

Just Like Their parents?

Generation Y (Gen Y) is an age-cohort characterized by a desire to be independent, assertive, expressive and innovative. They have grown up using computers and experiencing cultural diversity and divorce as social norms. Often referred to as the “echo boom,” members of Generation Y are the children of the original United States Baby Boomers. Born between 1977 and 1994, Gen Y is the second largest cohort to date and is comprised of two age segments: the “twenty-somethings” and the “teens” (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, & Best, 2007). More importantly, “as a whole they are expected to be the highest-educated generation to date with incomes that should follow” (Hawkins et al., 2007, 132).

While Generation Y is massive in terms of its 70 million-plus members (DiSalvatore, 2007) and capacity to integrate technology into their daily lives, the dominant marketing challenge regarding this group of individuals is their seeming “allergy” to advertising. Perhaps their reaction to traditional advertising approaches are a result of their autonomy or the fact that they grew up with pervasive advertisements presented through numerous channels. Nevertheless, marketers are continually challenged as they seek to penetrate a set of sophisticated defenses designed to resist traditional “marketing hype” (Hawkins et al., 2007).

While they may be young, Generation Y is comprised of experienced shoppers who have been making brand decisions at a far younger age than previous generations (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). As a result, they are savvy shoppers who know that advertisements exist to sell products (Hawkins et al., 2007). Furthermore, Gen Y members are part of “the new phenomenon known as ‘smart shopping’, a tendency for consumers to invest considerable time and effort into seeking and utilizing promotion-related information to achieve savings” (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003, 102).

In response to Gen Y's presumed aversion and resistance to traditional advertising in such media as print, television and radio, marketers have leveraged the demographics' use of technology to reach them. What marketers have found is not an age-cohort that is immune to advertising but just the opposite: Gen Y appears to be a generation obsessed with advertising, even using it as a form of entertainment. Product web sites have been transformed by marketers into lifestyle sites, where visitors not only learn about products but interact with it through games, videos and various other types of downloads. Video-streaming web sites such as the popular YouTube, allow users to watch their favorite commercials and even spoofs of advertisements done by other YouTube users. With the Internet and U.S. mega malls serving as entertainment venues, Gen Y has grown up with greater opportunities to shop than previous generations. Thus, shopping, advertising and entertainment have become one (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003).

Still, the marketing challenge to capture Gen Y's interest is elevated when the focus turns to "big ticket" items such as automobiles, where a higher level of motivation, monetary commitment and decision-making are required. One way marketers are confronting the challenge is by seeking to develop brand loyalty at an early age. This is a vital marketing objective. "It is expected Generation Y as a whole will represent 40 percent of the auto market in 10 years, a number that has automakers like Toyota and Ford clamoring to attract this group early and earn its loyalty" (Hawkins et al., 2007, 132). A significant portion of Gen Y has already entered the auto market or will in the next few years. In 2001 alone, Gen Y buyers under the age of 23 purchased more than 400,000 new vehicles, and as this generation ages the numbers will continue to climb (Halliday, 2002). Toyota Motor Sales estimates that Gen Y will

account for “4 million new-vehicle sales by 2010 and 6.5 million units in 2020” (Halliday, 2002, 1).

Automakers wishing to capture significant market share of Gen Y face a complex task: selling a traditional advertising averse generation a product that requires a large monetary commitment. Determining the specific motivations of this demographic relative to the highly involved purchase of a car is even more complex. In the early 2000s, due to the lack of affordable, trendy, new models, automakers worldwide struggled to get young buyers in their showrooms. In an effort to gain Gen Y market share, automakers released various edgier and sometimes retro models such as the Chrysler PT Cruiser, Honda Element and Toyota Echo (Eisenstein, 1999) hoping to attract the young, non-conformists who had previously been attracted to makers such as Mitsubishi, Saturn and Volkswagen (Halliday, 2002).

When efforts to attract young car buyers to new models were not successful, one car manufacturer created an entire car line to grab the attention of the young auto market. Launched in 2003, Scion was the first car line created specifically to appeal to Gen Y, not in terms of just the product but also the marketing plan (Welch, 2004). Using non-traditional advertising approaches such as an interactive web site and viral marketing tactics, not only did the Scion brand take off, but it also produced some unexpected results for marketers (Ciminillo, 2005). Ironically, the dictionary defines ‘scion’ as “a descendent or child from a wealthy, aristocratic or influential family” (Merriam-Webster, 2007). Scion, the brand that was created to reach the young and trendy, was reaching another generation as well: their parents.

With the average age of a Scion buyer at 39, it is clear that members of Generation Y are not the only consumers flocking to this unique line of cars (Freeman & Shirouzu, 2003). Gen Y’s parents, the Baby Boomers are largely responsible for the average Scion owner age. For the

78 million Baby Boomers born between 1947 and 1966, “the struggle to cling to youth has moved from a private war fought in front of the bathroom mirror to a highly public, generational obsession” (Weiss, 2002, 34). Unlike their children, members of the Baby Boomer generation have traditionally been an easy marketing target. Driven by an infatuation to regain their youth, Botox is now the nation’s most popular cosmetic procedure, Viagra has become a household name, and pharmacy shelves are loaded with anti-aging products. While America’s youth fixation is not a recent phenomenon, the extent to which Baby Boomers are preoccupied with aging is. Boomers “express no interest in giving up the center stage they’ve dominated for decades” (Weiss, 2002, 35), instead they are creating a new mid-life model, focused on renewal. Perhaps the Baby Boomer’s attraction to the Scion line is a result of their desire to re-live their youth. Whether Scion’s non-traditional advertising methods also added to their attraction of the brand remains to be seen.

Research Questions

- 1) How do Generation Y and Baby Boomer members differ in their self-reported motivations for purchasing a particular automobile?
- 2) How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported perceptions of status and self-image as associated with automobile ownership?
- 3) How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported advertising media preferences?
- 4) How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported affective responses to traditional print advertisements?

Rationale

Personal Rationale

As I was leaving for my freshman year of college in 2004, my mother traded her SUV for a new Scion xA. Surprised by her purchase, I was envious that my mother's new car was "cooler" than mine. Three years later, I was still confused why a woman in her early 50's had purchased a car blatantly marketed to her children's generation. As an intern at a local advertising agency (and with a greater insight into consumer behavior), I became increasingly fascinated by the subject when I noticed that two co-workers owned the same Scion xB model, in identical colors. While both individuals worked in the same department, their age and income were drastically different: One was a Gen Y member fresh out of graduate school and the other was a top-notch Baby Boomer executive with Gen Y children of her own. I couldn't help but wonder what attracted them both to the car and if they made the purchase for the same reasons.

Scholarly Rationale

Market researchers have found that Generation Y does not respond well to traditional advertising. Instead, members of Gen Y prefer to seek out information on their own through the use of the internet and word of mouth rather than be bombarded with advertisements (Jackson, 1999). For years, automobile manufacturers have struggled to capture the youth market. It appears, through the success of Scion, that with the correct combination of non-traditional advertising and products, automakers have found the right strategy. What has yet to be understood is why two very different groups of individuals continue to flock to the same product. With Scion being a relatively new success, little research has been done on Gen Y's motivations

when purchasing a new car. Instead, current scholarly research is focused on Gen Y motivations relative to less risky purchases requiring a significantly lower amount of commitment, such as apparel. Even more surprising, is the lack of scholarly attention on consumer motivations of the Baby Boomer generation. While market research exists on both generations, the extent to which researchers have focused on automobile purchases is limited. Furthermore, no research was found on how and why Generation Y as well as members of the Baby Boomer generation might be attracted to the same product with the same marketing efforts or if both generations share the same advertising media preferences.

Generation Y and the Baby Boomers are the most significant generations in history in terms of their size and their overall impact on society. Both generations grew and shaped equally unique, but different eras. Deciphering the differences and similarities in these two generations has a large social significance. Large-ticket purchases require a great amount of thought and commitment. As a result, identifying motivations behind these types of purchases leads to a deeper understanding of an individual's psyche, and in turn a greater understanding of Generation Y and the Baby Boomers. These findings could be used for additional communication and psychology research and are critical for marketers. The significance not only applies to consumer products but also for non-for-profit causes such as public service announcements. Socially, this study contributes to not only uncovering what prompts Gen Y and the Baby Boomers to spend, but also the best way to reach them. The result is a potentially enormous benefit to charitable organizations, as they learn effective ways to target both generations studied. This comparative study examines the differences and similarities that exist in automobile purchase motivations between Gen Y and the Baby Boomers, as well as preferred advertising methods.

Literature Review

While Generation Y's motivations for purchasing an automobile have received little scholarly attention, researchers have studied Gen Y consumers. As this generation ages, their purchasing power continues to climb. This has scholars and marketers alike searching for insight into these powerful buyers (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003). Researchers Cathy Bakewell & Vincent-Wayne Mitchell conducted a study of female Generation Y members and their decision-making styles when purchasing clothing. Early research found that shopping, which this generation defines as a leisure activity, accounts for an average of 11 hours a week for U.S. female teenagers (Herbig et al., 1993). Older Gen Y members such as college students are not any different than their teen counterparts: they have over 11 hours of free time to fill, much of which is spent by shopping. Furthermore, college students' purchasing power of \$105 billion, means on average they spend nearly \$300 a month on personal and discretionary items (Gardyn, 2002). Gen Y has been brought up with more consumer goods and service choices than any other generation to date (Quelch & Kenny, 1994) along with an unparalleled amount of marketing campaigns and retailing formats (TRU, 1999). This consumer environment in which Generation Y grew up in has largely shaped their purchase motivations.

Bakewell and Mitchell (2003) identified five different types of decision makers among female Generation Ys: Recreational Quality Seekers, Recreational Discount Seekers, Shopping and Fashion Uninterested, Trend-Setting Loyals and Confused, Time/Money Conserving (2003). Studying apparel purchase motivations, the researchers found that each of these groups vary not only in the decisions they make, but also in their basic motivations. This study bears a significant relationship to this paper's interest in automobile purchase motivations. Bakewell and Mitchell's sample largely consisted of Recreational Quality Seekers: those who pay extra for

brand names and dedicate a substantial amount of time to finding exactly what they are looking for. While Generation Y may be young, these findings confirm that they are highly experienced shoppers. Thus, they who know what they want and are willing to spend the necessary time and money in order to do so (2003).

The varying categories of Gen Y consumers are directly linked to the advertising and consumer socialization they grew up with. Those who spend considerable time searching for the right product or the right deal, are further evidence of the “smart shopper” phenomenon (Bakewell & Mitchell, 1997). In contrast, members of Gen Y who have not adapted as a “smart shopper” belong to the Confused Time/Money Conserving group. Research suggests that one of the principal reasons for confused Gen Y consumers is the attempts by marketers to meet consumers’ needs in a highly competitive world (Mitchell & Papavassiliou, 1999). Thus, Gen Y is bombarded with excessive opportunities and reasons to shop, eventually causing consumer confusion and apathy. For the purpose of this study, Generation Y’s purchase motivations will largely fall under the “smart shopper” as they are focused consumers who have specific shopping agendas.

While Bakewell and Mitchell confirmed previous beliefs that most female Generation Y members enjoy shopping as a form of leisure, their discovery of Trend-Setting Loyals, is perhaps most relevant to the study of Gen Y and consumer motivations in the purchase of an automobile. Automakers are clamoring to attract Gen Y’s loyalty early so they will continually purchase the same brand. Toyota introduced the Scion line with the intent to create an introductory brand that will serve as a feeder to higher car models as Gen Y ages and their incomes increase. Thus, a Scion owner will eventually become a Toyota owner, who will eventually become a Lexus owner (Hawkins et. al, 2007). Bakewell and Mitchell’s study established that Trend-Setting

Loyals are of greatest interest to marketers because once their “preferences are established, patronage is assured” (103). It can be inferred that Trend-Setting Loyals are who automakers like Scion, wish to capture.

Another study of Generation Y consumer motivations by Martin and Turley (2004) sought to distinguish social and objective motivations to consume. Traditionally, social consumption motivations are often seen as “detrimental or unacceptable” (2004, 468). These are motivations based on self-expression, keeping up with the latest trends and fitting in. Objective motivations include those motivations such as shopping experience and quality of product. While this study focused on shopping malls and older Gen Y members (19-25 years old), the sample was comprised of both males and females, something that the previous study by Bakewell and Mitchell lacked.

Martin and Tully (2004) found that males and females “exhibited no differences in term of their objective and social consumption motivations as both genders indicated that they are more objectively motivated shoppers” (6). The results suggest that college-aged Gen Y’s “place a higher emphasis on the objective, functional and economic issues associated with mall consuming than they are placing on the opinions of other important peers or social groups that might have an influence on their mall purchases” [*sic*] (6). The results of this study can be attributed to the growing fiscal responsibility of college-aged Gen Y consumers and the fact that they have likely out-grown the teenage angst of “fitting in”. It can be inferred that Gen Y’s consumer motivations include individuality, practicality and value.

While Gen Y may be smart shoppers, a study by Ma and Niehm (2006) affirmed that the majority of 18 to 21 year olds’ shopping behavior is still defined as brand and fashion conscious: highly valuing image, as well as objective motivations such as price and quality (2006). These

findings contradict Martin and Tully's results of older Gen Y members ascribing a higher importance to individuality, practicality and value (2004). In conclusion, Gen Y may be comprised of brand conscious consumers who also ascribe a high value on product attributes such as price, quality and individuality. This study sought to answer these discrepancies found in related research.

Understanding the purchase motivations for Generation Y was critical in this study, as was determining the motivations for their parents, the Baby Boomers. Carol M. Morgan and Doran J. Levy authors of Marketing to the Mindset of Boomers and Their Elders have identified four segments of this generation as well as the marketing implications for each: Upbeat Enjoyers, The Insecure, Threatened Actives, and Financial Positives (2002). Morgan and Levy's research can help to explain why some Baby Boomers are attracted to cars designed and marketed to Generation Y. With the exception of Threatened Actives, Baby Boomers are motivated to look and feel young. The segment Upbeat Enjoyers, are perhaps most comfortable with their age. To them, "the mirror reflects a face that has actually become more attractive with age" (2002, 3). Looking young is more about feeling young. Thus, this group gravitates towards products that create the experience of youth and is to likely to purchase an automobile with a young, hip vibe. Keeping up with the latest trends is one of the ways they combat feeling "old". The Insecure however, lack the care-free attitude of the Upbeat Enjoyers, largely due to financial concerns. They are the only lifestyle segment that see themselves as "unlucky and unsuccessful" (2002, 3). While the Insecure do not embrace change, they are quick to adapt products which physically make them look younger. Due to their limited income and desire to appear younger, this segment may also be drawn to cars marketed at Generation Y. Lastly, Financial Positives are savvy shoppers who are very careful with their money but quick to purchase products which

embody youth (2002). As a result, this segment would also be drawn to the price conscious, trendy vehicles, targeted at young adults.

A study in 2000 sent 20,000 questionnaires to “to people from all walks of life in all 50 states” seeking an applicant pool which would represent the average American (Moschis et al., 2000, 3). Focused on the buying behaviors of older adults, researchers found that with increasing age adults are less likely to be driving a recent automobile model (less than 6 years old), “suggesting either a low usage of the existing car(s) or increasing repairs rather than replacement” (Moschis et al., 2000, 128). More specifically, Moschis and his associates found that more than two-thirds (69.7%) of older Americans age 55 to 64 owned a recent automobile model, while only half (49.8%) of respondents age 75 and older did the same. The first group comprised of two-thirds owning a recent auto model, confirms that Baby Boomers hold a sizeable part of the auto market. In addition, results of the study indicated that automobile model ownership was dependent upon income and education, as those with higher incomes or education were more likely to own a recent automobile model. Similar to Morgan and Levy’s findings, the study identified four segments of Baby Boomers, differing only in their titles. Healthy Indulgers comparable to Morgan and Levy’s Upbeat Enjoyers segment, reported the highest new model ownership with 81.3% stating they purchased a new auto in the past 5 years (2000, 128).

While the scholarly research relative to the subject of Generation Y’s motivations in purchasing an automobile is limited in terms of gender, age and product, market research provides a deeper insight to the purchase motivations and decision-making styles of these two demographics. Gen Y is brand savvy and through brand experience and advertising they have decided which products they are willing to pay a premium for and which are not worth the expense. This generation does not respond to traditional selling, as they see the advertising they

grew up with as demeaning. Instead, “marketers can appeal to the young adult in this age category by complimenting them on their wise brand decisions, pointing out their wisdom and experience, and suggesting that their brand is the one that has stood the test of time and deserves the attention of this brand-savvy group” (Mintel, 2006, 10). Mintel market research reveals that Gen Y prefers to purchase brands they know, unless they are highly recommended by word of mouth. They are consumers who have high expectations of quality, a lack of acceptance to compromise and an inherent attraction to products that allow them to express their creativity. While Gen Y likes to stand out and rewrite the rules, they still value feeling part of a common group or cause. Their concern for causes such as the environment not only affects the value they place on the actions of their behavior but also leaves them highly responsive to cause-marketing. Overall Generation Y likes to consume, especially when it means supporting a cause deemed ‘worthy’ (2006). Mintel’s market research has further revealed that all automobile brands successful with Generation Y have one thing in common: Their ability to create an emotional connection between the consumer and the brand. Ultimately, the result is more than the purchase of a product, but rather the purchase of a lifestyle that includes initiation into a special community. This exclusivity relates to Gen Y’s importance of standing out yet still belonging. (Mintel - U.S., 2005). This factor suggests a strong relationship to the second research question of this study: How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported perceptions of status and self-image as associated with automobile ownership?

AutoPacific, a market research center focusing on automobiles, conducted a 2006 study focused on the youngest group of car buyers in the market: Gen Y. What they found was that members of Gen Y “want a high value, affordable to operate, long lasting vehicle that they can be proud to drive” (AutoPacific, 2006, 2). Do these features sound exclusive to one generation?

With a median ownership age of 39 for the Scion brand, it appears that Gen Y may not be all that unique in their automobile needs and desires. Scion is just one of several auto brands, producing models which have become bimodal products attracting both the young and old. For example, the Honda Element has also been successful in attracting both distinct age groups. However, what is unique about Scion is that the brand specifically designed to target one demographic, actually ended up reaching two. Scion has proven that a “young person’s car can bring more mature buyers into the dealership” (AutoPacific, 2006, 2).

Market Research can also give insights into the motivations of Baby Boomers when it comes to purchasing a car. As a whole, while Boomers are the wealthiest generation, they still devote a significant amount of time to finding the best price on big ticket purchases. In comparison to the rest of the adult population, this generation is slightly more eager to find the “best deal.” While research indicates price to be a main motivator in choosing an automobile, it certainly cannot be the only one. Most synonymous with the Baby Boomers, is their insatiable desire to regain their youth. This desire to look and feel young may be a large motivation in choosing hip, off-beat automobiles (Mintel, 2007).

The way in which members of the Baby Boomer generation respond to advertising may also account for their motivations in purchasing a particular car. Like their Gen Y children, the Baby Boomers are tech savvy and appear to respond similarly to traditional advertising. They have watched their children grow up with invasive marketing and thus have strong feelings about advertising directed at children. As a result, Boomers tend to dislike advertising: 48% have reported that advertisements have no affect on their purchase decisions (Mintel, 2007). Instead, the Baby Boomer generation likes to make independent brand choices, something that automakers trying to reach young adults have embraced in their advertising methods.

However, it is important to not over-generalize the Baby Boomer generation throwing all individuals born between 1947-1966 into a few neatly categorized segments. In fact, a study released in early 2008 was undertaken by a group of senior executives at Edelman (many Baby Boomers themselves), who sought to find if marketers are failing to connect with Baby Boomers. The 22-page survey that drew a sample 1,320 Baby Boomer respondents, was created by Edelman's in-house market research subsidiary. The study found that only 71% of Americans who fall into the Baby Boomer generation actually consider themselves part of the generation. These surprising findings suggest that marketers are failing to reach about 22 million Baby Boomers and may in fact be deterring them by over-generalizing the demographic. 54% of American Baby Boomers also reported feeling misrepresented and neglected by the advertising industry. Similar to Mintel's market research, the study found that Boomers possess little brand loyalty with 50% of males and 60% of females placing higher importance on price rather than brand. A gender gap among Baby Boomers was also found in media consumption habits. According to the study, "men consume with their heads", turning to information on "sports, news and business from AM radio online and print sources such as the Wall Street Journal" (Hupp, 2008, 1). Women on the other hand reportedly prefer to read do-it-yourself advice sections of the newspaper and hobby and life-style magazines rather than hard news (2008, 1).

Scholarly research and that of marketers, has asserted that Generation Y consumers are motivated by both practical and social motivations, which can vary depending on the type of decision maker (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). Baby Boomer consumers also can be categorized in terms of their motivations in decision making purchases. The majority of Baby Boomers share a common interest (and an arguable obsession) with staying young. Past research indicates the motivations of Generation Y and their parent generation, the Baby Boomers, may be quite

similar: Gen Y desires to stand out and be unique, and the Baby Boomers are seeking to relive their youth by doing just the same, by redefining what it means to be middle age. Furthermore, past research suggest that both generations may also share the same aversion to traditional advertising.

Method

Instrument

This study used an online, self-report survey (see Appendix C). The survey consisted of a total of 53 items: 42 close-ended items and 11 open-ended questions. The last section of the survey contained questions regarding two different print advertisements. Both the Generation Y sample and the Baby Boomer sample were given the same survey. A detailed description of how each variable was operationalized in this study can be found in the 'Analysis of the Method' (p. 22).

Sample

The convenience sample was limited to the Rochester Institute of Technology of 116 Generation Y (40 male, 76 female) members and 258 Baby Boomers (104 male, 154 female). Generation Y participants ranged in age from 18-31 years (those born between 1977-1994). Because the Gen Y sample was comprised of students enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts, participants largely ranged in age of 18 to 22 years. The Baby Boomer sample (those born between 1946-1967) was comprised of faculty and staff on the RIT campus, ranging in age from 41 to 62 years. At the time of this study, the student population size was approximately 15,000

with a faculty and staff population of approximately 3,000. Most respondents were automobile owners: 89.5% of Generation Y stated they owned or leased an automobile and 96.9% of all Baby Boomers stated they owned or leased an automobile. Of these auto owners 37.5% of Gen Y respondents reported purchasing the auto they currently owned new, while 65% of all Baby Boomer respondents reported doing the same. A sedan less than six years old was the most commonly reported type of vehicle owned or leased: 35.3% of Generation Y and 34.2% of Baby Boomer respondents reported owning or leasing this type of vehicle. 'Table 1' below describes the sample by type of vehicle owned or leased.

Table 1: Type of Vehicle Owned
(Percentages rounded to the nearest tenth)

Type of Vehicle	Generation Y	Baby Boomers
Sedan less than 6 years old	35.3%	34.2%
Sedan more than 6 years old	32.4%	17.0%
SUV less than 6 years old	14.7%	23.8%
SUV more than 6 years old	6.9%	7.1%
Truck less than 6 years old	2.9%	2.1%
Truck more than 6 years old	2.9%	2.5%
Van or Wagon less than 6 years old	2.0%	5.0%
Van or Wagon more than 6 years old	2.0%	8.3%

Procedure

Both the Baby Boomer sample and the Generation Y sample were administered the survey instrument using the online survey system Clipboard and were given four days to complete the survey. This easy to use tool was created by the Rochester Institute of Technology's Online Learning Department. While the Generation Y sample, comprised of students at the Rochester Institute of Technology, could be administered the survey during class time, this method of administering the survey did not apply to the Baby Boomer sample as it was comprised of faculty and staff at the Rochester Institute of Technology; the majority of whom were not also students. To avoid any discrepancies that could arise from administering the survey to each sample differently, Clipboard was chosen to reach both samples.

Clipboard's frequent use among faculty and staff not only assured the system's credibility, but also the sample's familiarity with using it. The Generation Y sample was comprised of students attending an institute highly focused on innovative technology, commonly navigating web-based technologies in their studies.

E-mail addresses for the Baby Boomer sample were obtained through the researcher's faculty advisor who forwarded an invitation to participate in this study. The same invitation was forwarded to students enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts through their Student Services department. This e-mail invitation to the survey briefly described the study and provided instructions on how to participate (see Appendix B). By following the provided link to the survey, participants agreed to consent.

Analysis of the Method

The survey instrument was used to answer the four research questions of this study:

- 1) How do Generation Y and Baby Boomer members differ in their self-reported motivations for purchasing a particular automobile?
- 2) How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported perceptions of status and self-image as associated with automobile ownership?
- 3) How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported advertising media preferences?
- 4) How do Gen Y and the Baby Boomer differ in their self-reported affective responses to traditional print advertisements?

This survey was developed to operationalize each of the variables in the four research questions outlined above: Generation Y, Baby Boomers, motivations in purchasing an automobile, status and self-image, advertising media preferences and affective responses to traditional print advertisements. A Likert Scale was used to measure participants' affective responses to close-ended statements. This scale, which was developed by Rensis Likert, "gauges the degree to which there is agreement or disagreement with statements representing a common issue" (Reinard, 2008, 139). The numerical scale 1-5, was ascribed to the respective statements: "strongly agree" (coded as 1), "agree" (coded as 2), "neither agree nor disagree" (coded as 3), "disagree" (coded as 4) and "strongly disagree" (coded as 4.)

Variable: Generation Y and Baby Boomers

Generation was operationalized by asking respondents their age. Along with asking participants' sex, these questions were placed at the end to avoid potential sensitivity and to ensure previous responses were not affected.

Variable: Motivations in purchasing an automobile

The samples' motivations in purchasing an automobile were operationalized by a series of questions involving car features. Using the Likert Scale, the variable was operationalized through a combination of three different sections: 'Features important to the respondent when purchasing an automobile' (items 1 to 7); 'Features important to the respondent when purchasing an automobile if money was no object' (items 8 to 14); 'Features which were important in choosing the automobile they currently own' (items 31 to 37). Each section contained an 'other' option allowing respondents to add in a feature which may have held importance but was not already listed. The differentiation of these three sections was crucial as it isolated practical motivations from true motivations (if money was not an object), allowing the researcher to calculate the extent to which participants' decisions in purchasing their car was based on financial (and other practical) motivations. Furthermore, the separation of these three sections distinguished features that were important to the respondent at the time they purchased their automobile, detecting any changes in motivations which may have occurred.

Throughout the survey, like items were grouped together, except for a deliberate separation of the section which asked respondents about the features that were important in choosing the automobile they currently owned. This section was placed near the end of the

survey so the responses given would not be affected by the similar format of the previous two sections.

Variable: Status and self-image associated with automobile ownership

The second research question of this study measured: How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported perceptions of status and self-image as associated with automobile ownership? Status and self-image of respondents relative to automobile ownership was operationalized in questions using the Likert Scale (items 2, 3, 9, 10, 32, 33). As explained in the previous paragraph, purchase motivations were measured by assigning the Likert Scale to assess the importance of several automobile features. Two of these features 'Brand' and 'Style/Look of auto' were associated with status and self-image. Respondents were asked to agree/disagree to the importance of listed features under the three sections outlined above: 'Features important to the respondent when purchasing an automobile'; 'Features important to the respondent when purchasing an automobile if money was no object'; 'Features which were important in choosing the automobile they currently own.'

The variable was further operationalized in the survey through items 38 and 39, by seeking a deeper understanding of respondents' view of self-image and status associated with automobile ownership. Participants were asked how much they agreed/disagreed with the following two statements: 'The automobile a person drives says a lot about them' and 'There are certain brands I would never consider buying.'

Variable: Advertising media preferences

In order to discern the way respondents felt about advertising, respondents were asked about the medium(s) in which they preferred to learn about products. Statements using the

Likert Scale, along with a multiple choice question were used to operationalize this variable (items 15 to 26, 40). These items sought to understand which advertising formats the sample preferred by asking respondents how they liked to learn about products. Item 20 contained an 'other' option for participants to add a response choice not already listed. Furthermore, respondents were asked how much they agreed/disagreed with statements regarding their feelings toward advertising.

Variable: Affective responses to print advertisements

In order to determine the differences in which members of Generation Y and the Baby Boomers responded to advertising, affective responses to print advertisements were measured. Because the study focused on comparing motivations in purchasing an automobile, two different car advertisements were selected for the survey. Respondents were asked to answer the same set of questions for each ad. Each advertisement contained one vehicle targeted at the generation of interest: one was an advertisement for the Toyota Highlander and the other was an advertisement for the Scion xB. In items 41 to 50, participants were asked to respond to a series of statements to measure their affective responses to each advertisement. The questions were designed to understand how the respondent viewed the ad and whom they thought the ad was marketed towards. An additional question for each advertisement offered participants the opportunity to make other comments regarding the print ads.

Additional Classifiers

Items 27 to 30 served to additionally classify the sample by car ownership. For the results of this data refer to 'Table 1: Type of Vehicle Owned.'

Results

The data analysis began with a two sample t-test to compare the mean response rates for Generation Y and Baby Boomers using the statistical program SPSS . * The p-value for each survey item was examined to determine the statistical significance. All test results with a p-value less than .05 were said to be statistically significant. A two-way ANOVA was used to further describe the sample by sex and automobile ownership.

Research Question #1: How do Generation Y and Baby Boomer members differ in their self-reported motivations for purchasing a particular automobile?

Significant differences in Gen Y and Baby Boomer responses to automobile features that were currently important to respondents occurred in items 1 ('Quality'), 3 ('Style/Look'), 5 ('Value/Price'), 6 ('Safety'). While both generations' responses fell on the same side of the agreement scale and both expressed the greatest agreement with the importance of 'Quality', Baby Boomers assigned a significantly higher importance to 'Quality' than did Gen Y. Results (see 'Table 2') showed that Gen Y respondents agreed to a higher importance on 'Style/Look', while Baby Boomer respondents agreed to a higher importance for 'Value/Price' and 'Safety'. Survey item 7 allowed respondents to share a feature that was important to them but was not already listed. Reliability/cost of repairs, functionality, fuel economy, comfort/convenience and service quality/convenience of dealer were the most common responses given by Baby Boomers. Fuel economy, functionality and reliability/cost of repairs were most frequently noted by Generation Y respondents.

* Mann-Whitney U-test was also run.

Table 2: Automobile features that are currently important
(Statistically significant findings are shaded)

Survey Item	GenY Mean Response	Baby Boomer Mean Response	P-Value
1. Quality is very important to me.	1.26	1.18	.010
2. Brand is very important to me.	2.46	2.67	.358
3. Style/Look is very important to me.	1.97	2.23	.011
4. Environmental Impact is very important to me.	2.13	1.98	.427
5. Value/Price is very important to me.	1.58	1.38	.018
6. Safety is very important to me.	1.46	1.34	.003

1 = Strongly Agree

5 = Strongly Disagree

Few differences were found between Gen Y and Baby Boomer responses to automobile features important regardless of price (if money was no object) (see 'Table 3' for values). Of all the features listed, both generations agreed with the importance statements of 'Quality' (8), 'Style/Look' (9), 'Environmental Impact' (11) and 'Safety' (12). Gen Y and Baby Boomer respondents disagreed with the importance statements for 'Value/Price' (13) and 'Brand' (9).

The p-values of survey items 'Safety' (12) and 'Value/Price' (13) indicate statistically significant differences in Gen Y and Baby Boomer responses. Baby Boomers agreed to a higher importance to 'Safety' and 'Value/Price' than Generation Y, even if money was no object. Survey item 14 allowed respondents to share a feature that would be important to them regardless of price that was not already listed. Most common responses among Baby Boomers was reliability/cost of repairs, service quality/convenience of dealer, fuel economy, options/gadgets and comfort/convenience. Gen Ys responded that fuel economy, options/gadgets, performance/handling and size/functionality would be important to them regardless of price.

Table 3: Automobile features that would be important if money was no object
(Statistically significant findings are shaded)

Survey Item	Gen Y Mean Response	Baby Boomer Mean Response	P-Value
8. Quality would be very important to me.	1.15	1.17	.320
9. Brand would be very important to me.	2.10	2.54	.884
10. Style/Look would be very important to me.	1.56	1.89	.373
11. Environmental Impact would be very important to me.	1.66	1.61	.029
12. Safety would be very important to me.	1.37	1.26	.036
13. Value/Price would be very important to me.	2.65	2.03	.000

1 = Strongly Agree

5 = Strongly Disagree

When responding to automobile features which were important when choosing the auto one currently owned 'Style/Look' elicited the greatest difference between Generation Y and Baby Boomer respondents (See 'Table 3' for values). Baby Boomers more strongly agreed to the importance of 'Style/Look' than Gen Y respondents. While both generations responses fell on the same side of the agreement scale, Generation Y stated the highest importance on 'Value/Price' while agreeing less to the importance of 'Quality', 'Environmental Impact' and 'Safety' than Baby Boomer respondents. Survey item 37 allowed respondents to share a feature that was important to them when choosing the automobile they currently owned. Most Baby Boomer respondents stated functionality, fuel economy, reliability/cost of repairs and performance/handling as important factors when they chose their current auto. Most common among Generation Y respondents was fuel economy and functionality of vehicle.

Table 4: Automobile features important when purchasing the auto you currently own
(Statistically significant findings are shaded)

Survey Item	Gen Y Mean Response	Baby Boomer Mean Response	P-Value
31. Quality was very important to me.	1.73	1.43	.075
32. Brand was very important to me.	2.75	2.46	.270
33. Style/Look was very important to me.	2.43	2.22	.019
34. Environmental Impact was very important to me.	2.99	2.44	.055
35. Safety was very important to me.	2.16	1.62	.107
36. Value/Price was very important to me.	1.29	1.34	.220

1 = Strongly Agree

5 = Strongly Disagree

A conceptual comparison between the three sections concentrating on the importance of automobile features was done: 'Features that are currently important', 'Features that would be important regardless of price (if money was no object)' and 'Features that were important in choosing one's current auto.' Of the three different sections, Gen Y respondents more highly agreed to the following automobile features in the section 'Features that would be important regardless of price': 'Brand', 'Style/Look', 'Environmental Impact' and 'Safety'. Not surprisingly, Gen Y respondents express the greatest agreement with the importance of 'Value/Price' in the section 'Features that were important in choosing one's current auto.' Baby Boomer respondents on the other hand, most highly agreed that 'Style/Look' would be important if money was no object. 'Environmental Impact' and 'Safety' were also most strongly agreed to in this section than any other. In addition, Baby Boomers expressed the greatest importance to 'Quality' if money was no object, yet most strongly agreed to 'Brand' in the section 'Features

that were important when choosing one's current auto'. 'Value/Price' was most strongly agreed to with 'Features that were important in choosing one's current auto' by Baby Boomer respondents.

Research Question #2: How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported perceptions of status and self-image as associated with automobile ownership?

Statistically significant differences in Generation Y and Baby Boomer responses occurred in items 3 ('Style/Look is very important to me') and 33 ('Style/Look was very important to me when choosing the auto I currently own'). Gen Y respondents agreed to a higher current importance to 'Style/Look' while Baby Boomer respondents agreed to a higher importance 'Style/Look' when they chose the car they currently own. Both Generation Y and Baby Boomers agreed that 'The automobile a person drives says a lot about them' and that 'There are certain auto brands I would never consider buying.' In both instances Gen Y respondents reported a higher level of agreement than Baby Boomers, though not enough to be statistically significant. There were no significant differences in responses to items 2, 9, 10, 32, but are discussed in greater detail with the first research question (p. 26). See 'Table 4' for values.

Table 5: Status and self-image associated with automobile ownership
(Statistically significant findings are shaded)

Survey Item	Gen Y Mean Response	Baby Boomer Mean Response	P-Value
2. Brand is very important to me.	2.46	2.67	.358
3. Style/Look is very important to me.	1.97	2.23	.011
9. Brand would be very important to me regardless of price.	2.10	2.54	.884
10. Style/Look would be very important to me regardless of price.	1.56	1.89	.373
32. Brand was very important to me when choosing the auto I currently own.	2.75	2.46	.270
33. Style/Look was very important to me when choosing auto I currently own.	2.43	2.22	.019
38. The automobile a person drives says a lot about them.	2.49	2.75	.632
39. Advertising has a lot to do with my decision to purchase a certain automobile.	1.77	1.95	.829

1 = Strongly Agree

5 = Strongly Disagree

Research Question #3: How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported advertising media preferences?

A significant difference in responses among Generation Y and Baby Boomers occurred in item 15*: 'How do you usually learn about automobiles (new models available, price and specs, etc.)?' Gen Y respondents reported most often learning about new autos by 'Word of Mouth'

* Survey item 15: 1 = 'Word of Mouth', 2 = 'The Internet', 3 = 'Television Advertising', 4 = 'Print Advertising', 5 = 'Other' fill-in option

while Baby Boomers stated they usually learned about new autos from 'The Internet.' Also, Gen Y respondents more strongly agreed that 'Advertising allows me to discover new products' while surprisingly, Baby Boomers more strongly agreed to the statement 'I like to use the internet to research products I am interested in.' While not a significant difference, when asked how they prefer 'to learn about new products in general' Baby Boomers more strongly agreed on 'Word of Mouth' and 'Print Ads.' Gen Y respondents on the other hand, more strongly agreed on 'The Internet' and 'Television Ads.' Furthermore, respondents in Generation Y more strongly agreed with the following statements: 'I prefer to seek out information regarding products I am interested in on my own' (item 23), 'When browsing through a magazine I often stop to look at ads that catch my eye' (item 24), and 'I enjoy watching television commercials' (item 25). Interestingly both Generation Y and Baby Boomer respondents had the same mean response to whether advertising had a lot to do with their decision to purchase a certain automobile (item 40), with both groups saying they neither agreed nor disagreed. Survey item 20 allowed respondents to list another way they preferred to learn about new products which was not already mentioned. The majority of both Baby Boomers and Generation Y respondents stated they liked to learn about new products through reviews and publications such as *Consumer Reports*. See 'Table 5' for values.

Table 6: Advertising Media Preferences
(Statistically significant findings are shaded)

Survey Item	Gen Y Mean Response	Baby Boomer Mean Response	P-Value
15. How do you usually learn about automobiles?* (see p. 31)	2.57	2.84	.045
16. I prefer to learn about new products through Word of Mouth.	2.04	1.93	.766
17. I prefer to learn about new products through The Internet.	1.83	2.16	.967
18. I prefer to learn about new products through Television Ads.	2.88	2.97	.652
19. I prefer to learn about new products through Print Ads.	2.84	2.64	.852
21. In general, I find advertising obtrusive and annoying.	2.70	2.40	.857
22. Advertising allows me to discover new products.	2.26	2.38	.034
23. I prefer to seek out information regarding products I am interested in on my own.	1.99	2.02	.805
24. When browsing through a magazine, I often stop to look at ads that catch my eye.	2.46	2.51	.246
25. I enjoy watching television advertisements.	3.41	3.56	.358
26. I like to use the Internet to research products I am interested in.	1.47	1.73	.045
40. Advertising has a lot to do with my decision to purchase a certain automobile.	3.72	3.72	.356

1 = Strongly Agree

5 = Strongly Disagree

Research Question #4: How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported affective responses to traditional print advertisements?

While not statistically significant both Generation Y and Baby Boomer respondents neither agreed nor disagreed to items 41-44 based upon the print advertisement for the 2008 Toyota Highlander Hybrid. Baby Boomer responses fell closer to the 'strongly agree' side of the scale than Gen Y responses. Additional comments provided by respondents (item 45) showed that the advertisement failed to resonate with either generation. The same questions (items 46-49) were asked after respondents viewed a print advertisement for the 2008 Scion xB. Interestingly, a statistically significant difference in responses occurred for item 49: 'I think this advertisement is targeted at people like me.' Baby Boomers disagreed with this statement, while the average Gen Y response was 'Neither Agree Nor Disagree.' Even more interesting, although there was no statistically significant difference between Gen Y and Baby Boomer responses to items 46 to 48, even though Baby Boomer responses disagreed that this Scion ad was targeted at them, they were more likely to agree with the following statements: 'After reading this advertisement, I want to know more about this automobile' (item 46), 'If I was in the market for a new automobile, I would be interested in purchasing this one' (item 47) and 'I could see myself in this automobile' (item 48). Additional comments provided by respondents (item 50) showed that both generations felt that the ad was targeted at a young market. Gen Y respondents noted that they liked the customizability of the Scion brand, while many Baby Boomer respondents said that price was an enticing feature. See 'Table 6' for values.

Table 7: Affective response to print advertisements
(Statistically significant findings are shaded)

Survey Item	Gen Y Mean Response	Baby Boomer Mean Response	P-Value
41. After reading this Toyota Highlander Hybrid advertisement, I want to know more about this automobile.	3.11	3.03	.855
42. If I was in the market for a new automobile, I would be interested in purchasing this automobile (Toyota Highlander).	3.45	3.32	.066
43. I could see myself in this automobile (Toyota Highlander Hybrid).	3.50	3.19	.069
44. I think this Toyota Highlander Hybrid advertisement is targeted at people like me.	3.47	3.05	.139
46. After reading this Scion xB advertisement, I want to know more about this automobile.	4.09	3.94	.292
47. If I was in the market for a new automobile, I would be interested in purchasing this one (Scion xB).	4.26	4.15	.302
48. I could see myself in this automobile (Scion xB).	4.39	4.23	.958
49. I think this Scion xB advertisement is targeted at people like me.	3.55	4.00	.000

1 = Strongly Agree

5 = Strongly Disagree

Discussion

Research Question #1: How do Generation Y and Baby Boomer members differ in their self-reported motivations for purchasing a particular automobile?

Results show that Generation Y and Baby Boomers share many similar motivations for purchasing a particular automobile. Respondents agreed to 'Quality' as the current most important feature, with Baby Boomers agreeing to a significantly higher importance. In addition, while both generations highly agreed to the importance of 'Style/Look' and 'Value/Price', Baby Boomers expressed the greatest agreement to the higher importance of 'Value/Price' while Generation Y expressed the greatest agreement to the importance of 'Style/Look'. These findings support that of previous researchers that Generation Y and the Baby Boomers are price-driven to find trendy car models (Intel, 2007). However, Baby Boomers agreed that even if money was no object, 'Safety' and 'Value/Price' would top their list of important features, signifying their maturity in agreeing to a higher importance to arguably more practical features. Interestingly, Baby Boomer results reported that this generation expressed a greater agreement to the importance of 'Quality' and 'Style/Look' when choosing the car they currently owned at the time of this study.

Several conclusions from these findings can be made. It appears that both Generation Y and the Baby Boomers have multi-dimensional motivations for purchasing a particular automobile. While Generation Y members like to stand out and express their own unique style, financial constraints cause them to highly value price. And while previous market research has emphasized Gen Y's concern for the environment, it appears that other practical features have a larger impact on their decision for choosing a particular vehicle. This is confirmed in the results

of this study as automobile features such as 'Style/Look' and 'Environmental Impact' were most highly agreed to as important if money was no object. AutoPacific's 2006 study on Generation Y found that the youth market wants a "high value, affordable to operate, long lasting vehicle that they can be proud to drive" (AutoPacific, 2006, 2). It appears that the Baby Boomers have similar desires. Like members of Gen Y, Baby Boomers are motivated by objective (practical) and social motivations to consume (Martin and Tully, 2004). While 'Style/Look' played a significant part in their decision to purchase their most recent automobile, practical features such as 'Safety' and 'Value/Price' also came into play. According to Mintel market research, although this generation has the highest incomes to date, they still devote a significant amount of time and energy into find the best deal (2006).

Research Question #2: How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported perceptions of status and self-image as associated with automobile ownership?

Results suggest that both generations view the automobile as an extension of themselves, ultimately serving as form of status and self-image. Gen Y and Baby Boomer respondents both agreed that 'The automobile a person drives says a lot about them' and that 'There are certain auto brands I would never consider buying.' Members of Generation Y agreed to 'Style/Look' as currently more important than Baby Boomers did, yet Baby Boomers expressed greater agreement that 'Style/Look' was more important when choosing the car they currently owned at the time of this study than Gen Y respondents; ultimately suggesting that Baby Boomers not only view the automobile as a status symbol, but actually use it to define themselves more than Generation Y members.

Research Question #3: How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported advertising media preferences?

Previous research has indicated that both Generation Y and Baby Boomers dislike traditional advertising. The results of this study show that both generations have similar attitudes towards their advertising media preferences, with 'Word of Mouth' and 'The Internet' as the two most preferred methods of learning about new products among both generations. However, when it comes to learning about automobiles, Generation Y reported most often using 'Word of Mouth', while Baby Boomers said they turned to 'The Internet.' Results showed that Generation Y respondents like to use the internet to research products they are interested in significantly more than Baby Boomers, indicating their preference of non-traditional media and preference of seeking out information on their own (Mintel, 2006). These differences may largely be a result of age, as even though Generation Y is comprised of experienced shoppers who began shopping at a far earlier age than previous generations, they may still turn to the advice and opinions of older adults. In fact, Mintel market research has previously asserted that Generation Y prefers to purchase brands they know, unless they are highly recommended by word of mouth (2006).

The results of this study also indicate that members of Generation Y agree that advertising allows them to discover new products, while Baby Boomers are indifferent on the subject. In fact, Generation Y expressed more agreeable attitudes towards advertising than Baby Boomers. Previous research has stated that Generation Y's parent generation the Baby Boomers, are leery of advertising with 48% stating it has no affect on their purchase decisions (Mintel, 2007). While it is clear that both Generation Y and the Baby Boomers like to make independent brand choices, Generation Y respondents' attitudes towards advertising are an example of the

blending of entertainment and advertising, such as product life-style web sites and commercials via YouTube. Generation Y enjoys advertising as long as it conforms to their media preferences.

Research Question #4: How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported affective responses to traditional print advertisements?

Findings show little difference in the self-reported affective responses to the print advertisements provided in the survey instrument and are a result of the print ads shown to respondents. The first ad shown, a print advertisement for the 2008 Toyota Highlander Hybrid, found in the October 29, 2007 issue of *Newsweek* was arguably targeted at an older auto market (Baby Boomers). Baby Boomer respondents failed to connect with ad finding the message confusing and contradictory. While there were no statistically significant differences between Generation Y and Baby Boomer responses, Baby Boomer respondents reported an overall greater agreement of interest in this vehicle than did Gen Y respondents, agreeing more highly to the following statements: 'After reading this advertisement, I want to know more about this vehicle', 'If I was in the market for a new automobile, I would interested in purchasing this one' and 'I could see myself in this automobile.' Furthermore, Baby Boomer respondents also more highly agreed that the advertisement was targeted at them than did Gen Y respondents.

The second ad shown, a print advertisement for the 2008 Scion xB found in the November 2007 issue of *Blender* magazine, was arguably targeted at the young auto market (Generation Y). While there were no significant differences among Generation Y and Baby Boomer responses, Baby Boomers showed a greater agreement of interest in the vehicle with the following statements: : 'After reading this advertisement, I want to know more about this vehicle', 'If I was in the market for a new automobile, I would interested in purchasing this one'

and 'I could see myself in this automobile.' Despite this, Baby Boomer respondents more strongly disagreed that the advertisement was targeted at them than did Generation Y respondents.

While the Scion brand's success among Generation Y may have not been captured in the survey's questions regarding the Scion xB print advertisement, the findings do show that Generation Y respondents recognize that they were the target market, regardless of their interest in the vehicle. Baby Boomer respondents on the other hand, reported a higher level of interest in the vehicle, even though they felt 'older' than the target market. Their level of interest supports Scion's past success with the Baby Boomer market. While they may not be the primary target for the brand, they seem to be attracted to the young, hip vibe.

The fact that neither generation expressed a high degree of interest in either print advertisement may suggest more than the fact that the two vehicles selected were of no interest to the sample. Generation Y's overall lack of interest in the vehicles presented in the print advertisements may be a testament to their preference of non-traditional advertising. These findings relative to the Baby Boomer sample may be more significant. With only 71% of Baby Boomers actually associating themselves with the generation, 22 million individuals in the United States are slipping past marketers. While scholars and market researchers have gone to great lengths to classify this large generation into segments, its clear that a significant proportion of the generation has failed to be recognized. A study released in early 2008 found that more than half (54%) of all U.S. Baby Boomers feel neglected and misrepresented by the advertising industry (Hupp, 2008). Like the Toyota Highlander Hybrid ad in the survey instrument and marketers surprise to Scion's success in the Boomer market, marketers may be failing to identify and reach a large portion of the Baby Boomer generation.

Limitations

As with any study, this one has limitations. The self-report survey instrument used in this study has proven validity as each variable is quantified in the instrument. However, while the survey uses a tested scale (Likert), the items on the survey are property of the researcher and have not been previously tested. In addition the self-report survey is limited in its findings as the data is not an exact representation of respondents' behavior, but rather a representation of what respondents say their behavior is. As a result, the findings of this study rely on the honesty and quality of responses from participants

The method used to administer the survey also had limitations. While the e-mail invitation was sent to chosen possible participants, it does not prevent the survey from being further distributed. Furthermore, not only did the study rely on the honesty and quality of responses from both samples, but the environment in which the survey was administered could not be controlled. Thus, distractions had the potential to affect the quality of responses.

Limitations also exist in the study's convenience sample, as this study is not representative of the entire population, or even the entire population at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Further limitations exist in the Generation Y sample, as it was not comprised of all students at the university but rather all students enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts. Many students in this curriculum study marketing and may be acutely aware of the survey's purpose.

Lastly, the sample's studied affective responses to advertisements were limited to print advertisements, presented digitally. The two print ads chosen for this study: a 2008 Toyota Highlander ad and a 2008 Scion xB ad, failed to draw distinct results from either generation.,

with most responses falling under 'Neither Agree Nor Disagree'. The researcher would suggest selecting a greater number of print advertisements from various brands (foreign and domestic) and well as models (sedan, SUV, hybrid, etc.) if pursuing this avenue in future research. An expansion of this study could include both Generations' affective and behavioral responses to non-traditional advertising methods.

A larger sample outside of one geographical area, encompassing an equal number of males and females, would provide more accurate results which would be better applied to the general population. Overall, this study's limitations suggest further research modifying the experimental design as well as better sampling.

Conclusion

Generation Y is often described as an age-cohort aversive to traditional advertising. Marketers have struggled to reach this demographic, especially when marketing products requiring a high level of decision-making and monetary commitment. Generation Y's parents, the Baby Boomers watched their children grow up in a society bombarded with advertisements and a culture driven by consumerism. As result, like their children, they are skeptical of advertising and prefer to make their own decisions independent from advertising. At the same time, Baby Boomers are dealing with a personal war fought in bathroom mirrors, doctor chairs and store fronts. Whether they are delaying or redefining retirement, this generation is taking on the 'evil' of aging like no other generation before. Their insatiable desire to regain their youth has driven them to products which offer the experience of feeling and looking young, such as the Scion brand.

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Research Question #3: How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported advertising media preferences?

Previous research has indicated that both Generation Y and Baby Boomers dislike traditional advertising. The results of this study show that both generations have similar attitudes towards their advertising media preferences, with 'Word of Mouth' and 'The Internet' as the two most preferred methods of learning about new products among both generations. However, when it comes to learning about automobiles, Generation Y reported most often using 'Word of Mouth', while Baby Boomers said they turned to 'The Internet.' Results showed that Generation Y respondents like to use the internet to research products they are interested in significantly more than Baby Boomers, indicating their preference of non-traditional media and preference of seeking out information on their own (Mintel, 2006). These differences may largely be a result of age, as even though Generation Y is comprised of experienced shoppers who began shopping at a far earlier age than previous generations, they may still turn to the advice and opinions of older adults. In fact, Mintel market research has previously asserted that Generation Y prefers to purchase brands they know, unless they are highly recommended by word of mouth (2006).

The results of this study also indicate that members of Generation Y agree that advertising allows them to discover new products, while Baby Boomers are indifferent on the subject. In fact, Generation Y expressed more agreeable attitudes towards advertising than Baby Boomers. Previous research has stated that Generation Y's parent generation the Baby Boomers, are leery of advertising with 48% stating it has no affect on their purchase decisions (Mintel, 2007). While it is clear that both Generation Y and the Baby Boomers like to make independent brand choices, Generation Y respondents' attitudes towards advertising are an example of the

blending of entertainment and advertising, such as product life-style web sites and commercials via YouTube. Generation Y enjoys advertising as long as it conforms to their media preferences.

Research Question #4: How do Generation Y and the Baby Boomers differ in their self-reported affective responses to traditional print advertisements?

Findings show little difference in the self-reported affective responses to the print advertisements provided in the survey instrument and are a result of the print ads shown to respondents. The first ad shown, a print advertisement for the 2008 Toyota Highlander Hybrid, found in the October 29, 2007 issue of *Newsweek* was arguably targeted at an older auto market (Baby Boomers). Baby Boomer respondents failed to connect with ad finding the message confusing and contradictory. While there were no statistically significant differences between Generation Y and Baby Boomer responses, Baby Boomer respondents reported an overall greater agreement of interest in this vehicle than did Gen Y respondents, agreeing more highly to the following statements: 'After reading this advertisement, I want to know more about this vehicle', 'If I was in the market for a new automobile, I would interested in purchasing this one' and 'I could see myself in this automobile.' Furthermore, Baby Boomer respondents also more highly agreed that the advertisement was targeted at them than did Gen Y respondents.

The second ad shown, a print advertisement for the 2008 Scion xB found in the November 2007 issue of *Blender* magazine, was arguably targeted at the young auto market (Generation Y). While there were no significant differences among Generation Y and Baby Boomer responses, Baby Boomers showed a greater agreement of interest in the vehicle with the following statements: : 'After reading this advertisement, I want to know more about this vehicle', 'If I was in the market for a new automobile, I would interested in purchasing this one'

and 'I could see myself in this automobile.' Despite this, Baby Boomer respondents more strongly disagreed that the advertisement was targeted at them than did Generation Y respondents.

While the Scion brand's success among Generation Y may have not been captured in the survey's questions regarding the Scion xB print advertisement, the findings do show that Generation Y respondents recognize that they were the target market, regardless of their interest in the vehicle. Baby Boomer respondents on the other hand, reported a higher level of interest in the vehicle, even though they felt 'older' than the target market. Their level of interest supports Scion's past success with the Baby Boomer market. While they may not be the primary target for the brand, they seem to be attracted to the young, hip vibe.

The fact that neither generation expressed a high degree of interest in either print advertisement may suggest more than the fact that the two vehicles selected were of no interest to the sample. Generation Y's overall lack of interest in the vehicles presented in the print advertisements may be a testament to their preference of non-traditional advertising. These findings relative to the Baby Boomer sample may be more significant. With only 71% of Baby Boomers actually associating themselves with the generation, 22 million individuals in the United States are slipping past marketers. While scholars and market researchers have gone to great lengths to classify this large generation into segments, its clear that a significant proportion of the generation has failed to be recognized. A study released in early 2008 found that more than half (54%) of all U.S. Baby Boomers feel neglected and misrepresented by the advertising industry (Hupp, 2008). Like the Toyota Highlander Hybrid ad in the survey instrument and marketers surprise to Scion's success in the Boomer market, marketers may be failing to identify and reach a large portion of the Baby Boomer generation.

Limitations

As with any study, this one has limitations. The self-report survey instrument used in this study has proven validity as each variable is quantified in the instrument. However, while the survey uses a tested scale (Likert), the items on the survey are property of the researcher and have not been previously tested. In addition the self-report survey is limited in its findings as the data is not an exact representation of respondents' behavior, but rather a representation of what respondents say their behavior is. As a result, the findings of this study rely on the honesty and quality of responses from participants

The method used to administer the survey also had limitations. While the e-mail invitation was sent to chosen possible participants, it does not prevent the survey from being further distributed. Furthermore, not only did the study rely on the honesty and quality of responses from both samples, but the environment in which the survey was administered could not be controlled. Thus, distractions had the potential to affect the quality of responses.

Limitations also exist in the study's convenience sample, as this study is not representative of the entire population, or even the entire population at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Further limitations exist in the Generation Y sample, as it was not comprised of all students at the university but rather all students enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts. Many students in this curriculum study marketing and may be acutely aware of the survey's purpose.

Lastly, the sample's studied affective responses to advertisements were limited to print advertisements, presented digitally. The two print ads chosen for this study: a 2008 Toyota Highlander ad and a 2008 Scion xB ad, failed to draw distinct results from either generation.,

with most responses falling under 'Neither Agree Nor Disagree'. The researcher would suggest selecting a greater number of print advertisements from various brands (foreign and domestic) and well as models (sedan, SUV, hybrid, etc.) if pursuing this avenue in future research. An expansion of this study could include both Generations' affective and behavioral responses to non-traditional advertising methods.

A larger sample outside of one geographical area, encompassing an equal number of males and females, would provide more accurate results which would be better applied to the general population. Overall, this study's limitations suggest further research modifying the experimental design as well as better sampling.

Conclusion

Generation Y is often described as an age-cohort averse to traditional advertising. Marketers have struggled to reach this demographic, especially when marketing products requiring a high level of decision-making and monetary commitment. Generation Y's parents, the Baby Boomers watched their children grow up in a society bombarded with advertisements and a culture driven by consumerism. As result, like their children, they are skeptical of advertising and prefer to make their own decisions independent from advertising. At the same time, Baby Boomers are dealing with a personal war fought in bathroom mirrors, doctor chairs and store fronts. Whether they are delaying or redefining retirement, this generation is taking on the 'evil' of aging like no other generation before. Their insatiable desire to regain their youth has driven them to products which offer the experience of feeling and looking young, such as the Scion brand.

Generation Y and the Baby Boomers possess many of the same motivations in choosing a particular automobile. Both generations want high quality vehicles at a good price that represent who they are. Baby Boomers' age may account for them ascribing a higher importance to practical features such as safety than Generation Y. For both generations the automobile serves as an extension of one's self, defining who they are and how they wish to be perceived.

However, Baby Boomers agree to the importance of the style and look when choosing the vehicle they currently own, suggests that Baby Boomers are using the automobile as a status symbol to a far greater extent than Generation Y. While Gen Y members value features such as style and look and environmental impact, practical features such as price and value currently take precedent, likely due to financial constraints. Lastly, while each generation may differ slightly on media preferences, they both prefer non-traditional advertising allowing them to control the messages they receive.

This study and that of previous researchers suggests that the Baby Boomer generation may be largely misunderstood. This misrepresentation of the largest generation to date is not only a problem for marketers but for social scientists, psychologists and other scholars interested in human behavior. Research efforts should be directed towards understanding this large group of individuals.

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Appendix A: Sources Searched

Articles, scholarly reports and books relative to the topic of this research project were search from September 10, 2007 to October 5, 2007. Communication, market research, psychology, social science and thesis and dissertation data bases available through the Rochester Institute of Technology library system were searched: *ABI/Inform*, *Academic Search Elite*, *ComAbstracts*, *Communication and Mass Media Complete*, *CQ Researcher*, *Emerald Full Text*, *Factiva*, *Journalism and Mass Communication Abstracts*, *LexisNexis Academic*, *Marketing Channel via Dialog 1*, *ProQuest*, *PsychArticles*, *SIRS Researcher*, *Social Science Citation Abstracts*, *Sociological Abstracts*, *Wilson Omnifile*. Also, reference sections of previous research pertaining to my study were used to find additional scholarly articles. The following key terms were used to search for literature: "Generation Y", "twentysomethings", "teenagers", "teens", "echo-boom", "Baby Boomer", "marketing", "consumers", "motivation", "Self-Concept", "purchase", "car", "automobile". The time frame searched for scholarly research was unlimited, due the fairly small amount of available research. Due to the timeliness of market research, my search was limited to findings no earlier than 2005. Articles featured in trade magazines, newspapers and other similar publications were searched from 1999 to 2007.

Appendix B: E-mail Survey Invitation

Dear [Faculty and Staff or fellow students],

You are invited to share your views as an automobile consumer. Below is a link to the online survey. Participation is voluntary, but necessary in order for you to be represented in this unique study. Pretests show that the survey takes approximately five minutes to complete and you are assured complete anonymity and confidentiality.

If you consent to this survey please click on the following link to participate:
<http://clipboard.rit.edu/takeSurvey.cfm?id=4pu5c6>

This link will expire in 4 days, on Friday, January 18, 2008 at 11:59 PM.

To request a copy of the results of this study please send me an e-mail to jxs7381@RIT.EDU, with 'Results Request' in the subject line. All requested results will be sent via e-mail during the first week of March 2008.

If you have any questions, concerns, or wish to report a research-related problem, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Your participation is greatly appreciated!

Best,

Jessica Sica-Lieber
Undergraduate Student
Advertising/Public Relations

Automobile Purchases and You

Web-Friendly Version Instructions:

Web-Friendly Version Instructions.
You are invited to offer your views as an automobile consumer.

Please carefully read and answer all applicable items on the survey instrument.

Pretests show the survey takes approximately 5 minutes to complete, however you will have as much time as you want.

Please choose the ONE response which best fits your answer.

This first section presents a series of statements regarding automobile features and their importance to you. For each statement, click on the response option that best indicates how much or little you agree with the statement.

When purchasing an automobile:				
Strongly Agree				
Agree				
Neither Agree Nor Disagree				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
				1. Quality is very important to me.
				2. Brand is very important to me.
				3. Style/Look is very important to me.
				4. Environmental Impact is very important to me.
				5. Safety is very important to me.
				6. Value/Price is very important to me.

7. If applicable, please list another feature not mentioned above, which is very important to you when purchasing an automobile:

This next section presents the same series of statements regarding automobile features and their importance to you. This time, please click on the one response option that best indicates how much or little you agree with the statement **REGARDLESS OF PRICE**.

If money was NO object when purchasing an automobile:				
Strongly Agree				
Agree				
Neither Agree Nor Disagree				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
				8. Quality would be very important to me.
				9. Brand would be very important to me.
				10. Style/Look would be very important to me.
				11. Environmental Impact would be very important to me.
				12. Safety would be very important to me.
				13. Value/Price would be very important to me.

14. If applicable, please list another feature not mentioned above, which would be very important to you when purchasing an automobile if money was NO object:

Just Like Their Parents?

15. How do you usually learn about automobiles (new models available, price and specs, etc.)?

Word of Mouth (family, friends, etc.)

The Internet

Television Advertising

Print Advertising (magazines, newspapers, etc.)

Other...

This set of questions asks how you prefer to learn about new products in general.

I prefer to learn about new products through:				
Strongly Agree				
Agree				
Neither Agree Nor Disagree				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
				16. Word of Mouth
				17. The Internet
				18. Television Ads
				19. Print Ads (magazines, newspapers, etc.)

20. If applicable, please list another way you prefer to learn about new products which is not mentioned above:

Just Like Their Parents?

This next set of statements asks how you feel about advertising.

Strongly Agree					
Agree					
Neither Agree Nor Disagree					
Disagree					
Strongly Disagree					
					21. In general, I find advertising obtrusive and annoying.
					22. Advertising allows me to discover new products.
					23. I prefer to seek out information regarding products I am interested in on my own.
					24. When browsing through a magazine, I often stop to look at ads that catch my eye.
					25. I enjoy watching television commercials.
					26. I like to use the Internet to research products I am interested in.

You're half-way done!

The next two sections contain questions about your automobile ownership.

27. Do you own or lease an automobile?

Yes

No (If no, please skip to question #41)

Is this automobile new or used?

Used

1000

14. When the	
--------------	--

37. If applicable, please list another feature not mentioned above, which was very important to you when choosing your current automobile:

Just Like Their Parents?

For each statement, click on the one response option that best indicates how much or little you agree with the statement.

Strongly Agree					
Agree					
Neither Agree Nor Disagree					
Disagree					
Strongly Disagree					
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	38. The automobile a person drives says a lot about them.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	39. There are certain auto brands I would never consider buying.
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	40. Advertising has a lot to do with my decision to purchase a certain automobile.

You're almost done!

Just Like Their Parents?

If you were asked to skip to question #41, please continue here.

Please take a moment to look at the advertisement below.

ADVERTISEMENT #1

HYBRID SYNERGY DRIVE

THE ALL-NEW 2008 HIGHLANDER HYBRID **WITH ECON MODE**

Everything Counts.
Especially when it comes to fuel efficiency. Introducing our advanced Hybrid Synergy Drive* with ECON mode, which helps you go even farther on a tank of gas. Way farther. Just one of the Highlander's new features you can learn about at toyota.com

TOYOTA
moving forward

*ECON mode shown with available equipment. © 2007 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.

Just Like Their Parents?

Please answer the following questions, based on your viewing of ADVERTISEMENT #1.

Strongly Agree					
Agree					
Neither Agree Nor Disagree					
Disagree					
Strongly Disagree					
					41. After reading this advertisement, I want to know more about this automobile.
					42. If I was in the market for a new automobile, I would be interested in purchasing this one.
					43. I could see myself in this automobile.
					44. I think this advertisement is targeted at people like me.


45. Please provide any additional thoughts/comments about ADVERTISEMENT #1:

Just Like Their Parents?


Please take a moment to look at the advertisement below.

ADVERTISEMENT #2

INSPIRATION




PERSONALIZATION




2004 Scooby®
Starting at \$14,970

Standard features include:
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows

Customization accessories include:
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows
- 10-speaker Power Windows with power windows



© 2004 Scooby®
All rights reserved.



Just Like Their Parents?

Please answer the following questions, based on your viewing of ADVERTISEMENT #2.

Strongly Agree				
Agree				
Neither Agree Nor Disagree				
Disagree				
Strongly Disagree				
				46. After reading about this advertisement, I want to know more about this automobile.
				47. If I was in the market for a new automobile, I would be interested in purchasing this one.
				48. I could see myself in this automobile.
				49. I think this advertisement is targeted at people like me.

50. Please provide any additional thoughts/comments about this advertisement:

The last two questions are solely for classification purposes.

51. Sex:

Male

Female

52. Age on your last birthday:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
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1 of survey.