

**COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FRESH PRODUCE
ADVERTISEMENTS**

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

The obesity rate in America more than doubled since the 1960s. In an effort to curb the obesity problem in America, the fresh produce industry has focused its marketing efforts on access and promotion of fresh fruits and vegetables. For the purposes of this study, *promotion* was further investigated to identify millennial college students' perceptions of digital fresh produce advertisements. A mixed-method approach was used to determine how students perceive paid, unpaid, and endorsed advertisements used in active fresh produce advertising campaigns. An online questionnaire and four focus groups were used for data collection.

Students ($N = 175$) knowledgeable in marketing, selling, and design principles were recruited from two upper-level undergraduate courses within the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to participate in this study. Questionnaire responses ($n = 143$) were analyzed to gain a better understanding of the study participants and assign participants to follow-up group discussions about fresh produce advertisements. Students ($n = 22$) were assigned to a focus group based on high and low involvement with social media and fresh produce. Focus groups were broken up into two parts (1) Snapchat approach and (2) open-ended discussion. The facets model of effective advertising served as the analysis framework for this study. Students' responses during the Snapchat approach were coded and analyzed according the model, and the discussion responses were transcribed and analyzed using a content analysis approach.

The facets model outlined six responses successful advertisements should generate from consumers—*perception, cognition, affective/emotion, association, persuasion, and behavior*. Students' responses aligned most closely with *behavior* and *association* for paid advertisements; *cognition* and *persuasion* for unpaid advertisements; and *cognition* and *other* for endorsed advertisements. Overall, students were attracted to the advertisements showcasing fresh, appealing produce presented in a more homegrown, less flashy approach and to advertisements portraying a clear message, understandable taglines, and body copy. Future research is needed to increase applicability of the study results and to further investigate students' longitudinal behavioral change. Additionally, a future study could be conducted using biometrics to determine if perception is reality.

DEDICATION

As I reflect on my time during my graduate experience at Texas A&M University, I can't help but smile. OK, I'd be lying if I said I didn't flinch a few times during that reflection. Graduate school is a lot like a roller coaster; jam-packed with twists and turns, ups and downs, smooth sailing stretches and sharp right turns. Always unpredictable and little bit rickety, I used to be scared of roller coasters. But, after riding shotgun on the greatest roller coaster of my life since August 2014, Space Mountain doesn't look so bad.

I would like to dedicate my thesis to the two people that have been beside me since day one, my parents, Burton and Cindy Prather. I've said it before and I'll say it again, I wouldn't be where I am today without your unfailing guidance, love, and support. Thank you for encouraging me to pursue my dreams, pushing me to be my best, and reminding me to stay strong in my faith. No matter where I roam, Louisiana and TCB Ranch will always be the place I call home.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to America, home of over-sized portions, free soda refills, and county fairs offering everything under the sun—deep-fried. Delicious, traditional American food staples such as hamburgers, apple pies, and French fries are not only supersized but also calorie dense. Consumption of too many calories contributes to an unhealthy lifestyle that can lead to diseases such as type two diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and obesity (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2012).

Obesity is a documented problem among Americans (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2012), perhaps, because Americans “have become disconnected from their food” (Whaley & Enciso, 2011, para. 8). Americans lack information not only about where their food is grown but also where their food is produced (Whaley & Enciso, 2011). Although disconnected, 79% of consumers who participated in a survey administered by the U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance reported it is extremely important for farmers and ranchers to produce “healthy choices for all consumers” (Whaley & Enciso, 2011, para. 15) to enjoy. Thus, it seems ironic that Americans seek healthy food choices and, yet, a majority of the population is obese.

In 2012, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported that at least one in three adults and “one-third of children and adolescents” (para. 3) are obese. The obesity rate in America has nearly tripled since the early 1960s and is often caused by an energy imbalance within the body, due to caloric intake (U.S. Department of

Health & Human Services, 2012). Caloric intake contributes to obesity; however, it is not the sole cause of the disease. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2012; 1998), obesity results from a combination of factors including genetics, lack of physical activity, geographical location, eating habits, and household income.

Dining Out More, Cooking Less

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015), a typical U.S. household spends 12.9% of earned income on food. In 2013, Americans spent an average of \$3,977 on food to be prepared at home including protein (meat, poultry, fish, and eggs); fruits and vegetables; cereals and bakery products; and dairy products, which was a 2.7% increase in sales from 2012 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Additionally, Americans spent \$2,625 in 2013 dining at fast food and sit-down restaurants—expressing a difference in price of only \$1,352 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Although the price difference on paper is small, eating outside of the home “adversely affects dietary intake” (Mancino, Todd, & Lin, 2009, p. 1) and has a substantial impact on an individual’s health.

Americans eating habits and traditional food sourcing shifted between 1977 and 1996 as individuals introduced more calories and food prepared away from the home into their daily diet (Guthrie, Lin, & Frazao, 2002). Because of this, Guthrie et al. (2002) investigated the nutrient content of food prepared away from the home. They found food prepared away from the home was higher in fat content and lower in necessary nutrients including fiber, calcium, and iron than food prepared in the home (Guthrie et al., 2002).

In addition, Guthrie et al. (2002) reported adults received most of their caloric intake from fast-food establishments, perhaps, implying modern eating habits involve dining out more and cooking less. According to the National Center for Health Statistics (2013, February), obese adults receive 13.2% of their daily caloric intake from dining out at fast-food establishments that often serve high-processed foods. Moodie et al. (2013) suggested adults who consume an excess of “energy-dense ultra-processed foods, unlike low-energy foods such as fruits and vegetables” (p. 671) run the risk of becoming obese.

To combat this risk, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) promotes not only healthy eating habits but also healthy lifestyles (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1998). In an effort to encourage individuals to lead healthier lifestyles, USDA proposed four specific guidelines for healthy food and nutrient consumption (McGuire, 2011). The majority of the guidelines focus on eating habits and encourage individuals to (a) maintain energy balance; (b) focus on nutrient-dense foods; (c) reduce added sugars, solid fats, and sodium; and (d) stay active (McGuire, 2011). Overall, USDA suggested individuals who follow these action steps are able to not only achieve but also maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Food Marketing

Since 1997, food marketing in the U.S. has had a substantial impact on the American economy and accounts for the second largest advertising group in America (USDA Economic Research Service, n.d.). Because, “the food market is huge [,] food is a repeat purchase item [,and] food is one of the most highly branded items in the American economy” (USDA Economic Research Service, n.d, 1990, p. 174), food lends

itself to major advertising opportunities. Furthermore, the USDA Economic Research Service (n.d.) found that “advertising expenditures tend to be highest for the mostly highly processed and highly packaged foods” (p. 176). Unfortunately, highly processed foods are still heavily advertised today while healthy foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, are often placed on the back burner (Moodie et al., 2013). Thus, Americans are continually tempted—and often persuaded—to make poor eating decisions (USDA Economic Research Service, n.d.).

Poor eating habits are not restricted to adults. Sadly, childhood obesity is at the core of the American obesity crisis. Currently, 18.6% of boys and 15% of girls ages two to 19 are considered obese, resulting in a combined childhood obesity rate of 33.6% (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2012). In an effort to lower those statistics and potentially address the overall obesity problem in America, Dan’l Almy, president of DMA Solutions, said the fresh produce industry has turned its marketing efforts to access and promotion (personal communication, April 21, 2015). Programs such as *Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools* provide children with access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Whereas, campaigns such as *5 A Day Works!* promote fresh fruits and vegetables and provide the public with awareness of the importance of eating fresh.

Launched in 2010, in conjunction with The Partnership for a Healthier America, the *Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools* campaign supports First Lady Michelle Obama’s *Let’s Move!* Initiative and was founded by the Chef Ann Foundation, National Fruit and Vegetable Alliance, United Fresh Produce Association Foundation, and Whole Foods Market (*Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools*, n.d.). *Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools* was

launched with the goal of preparing children “for a lifetime of healthy eating” (Why Support Salad Bars, n.d., par. 4). Additionally, *Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools* aims to provide children with “daily access to fresh fruits and vegetables” (Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools, n.d., par. 1) and, since its launch, *Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools* has raised \$10,217,382, granted 4,078 salad bars, and served 2,039,000 children (Let’s Move Salad Bars to Schools, n.d.).

In 1991, the *5 A Day Works!* campaign sought to promote healthy food choices and attempted to encourage Americans to change their eating habits to include fresh produce. Additionally, the campaign was developed with the goal of raising awareness about the importance of consuming fresh fruits and vegetables (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005). By providing access and promotion, the goal of the *5 A Day Works!* campaign was to help people “add more fruits and vegetables to their diets” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005, p. 1) and provide consumers with healthy food choices, essentially, promoting healthy eating habits.

Since its launch, *5 A Day Works!* has been present in several states across the U.S. with each state creating initiatives to achieve the overall goals of the campaign. For example, in California, the *California 5 A Day—for Better Health!* campaign was initiated to encourage Californians to eat five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables per day and participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005). According to the campaign director Mary Kay Solera, “a diet that includes a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables helps people stay

healthy and can help reduce their risk for many chronic diseases” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005, p. 7), including obesity.

Providing access to and promoting fresh fruits and vegetables to the American population is perhaps one way to encourage Americans to incorporate a colorful, nutrient-dense variety of food choices into their daily diet (D. Almy, personal communication, April 21, 2015). In the long run, Americans’ perceptions of fresh produce could have an impact on their food preferences, purchasing decisions, and eating habits.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Advertising is a form of paid, nonpersonal communication “from an identified sponsor, using mass media to persuade or influence an audience” (Richards & Curran, 2002, p. 64). Considered one-way communication (Tähtinen, 2006), advertising creates a message for a marketer, which is received by an audience (Wells, Moriarty, & Burnett, 2006). Such communication between a marketer and an audience plays an important role in the advertising process and contributes to a company's marketing, communication, economic, and social value (Wells et al. 2006). Thus, the end goal of advertising is to generate exposure for a business, product, or service (Wells et al. 2006).

On average, individuals are exposed to up to 5,000 advertisements per day (Johnson, 2014, September 29). In 2015, the U.S. spent a total of \$182.6 billion on advertising (Plunkett Research, Ltd., 2015), in turn, stimulating economic impact (Wells et al. 2006) for the American economy. Of that spending, \$31.8 billion was spent on traditional print advertisements and an overwhelming \$96.7 billion was spent on mobile and online advertisements (Plunkett Research, Ltd., 2015). Although digital advertising officially made its debut in 1994 (Taylor, 2009), recent advertising expenditures express a spending difference of \$65.8 billion in favor of digital advertising (Plunkett Research Ltd., 2015). In addition, Taylor (2009) reported advertising is “mov[ing] forward” and is “substantially impacted” (p. 412) and influenced by digital media. Thus, implying advertising has formally moved to a digital era.

Advertising Goes Digital

According to Mitchell (2015, April 29), more adults are obtaining daily news from digital platforms with “39 out of 50 news sites receiving more traffic from mobile devices than desktop computers” (para. 3). Additionally, in 2013, American Business Media (ABM) conducted a study titled *The Value of B-to-B* in which they polled 6,682 media users to determine that 96% of them used websites for general industry-related content. Furthermore, 69% used online magazines, 56% used mobile-optimized websites, 54% used social media, and 51% used mobile apps (ABM, 2013). As for print advertising, 73% of the media users polled visit an online website weekly; whereas, only 45% read print advertisements on a weekly basis (ABM, 2013). Therefore, although print media is still important, digital media is becoming the go-to-source for general industry-related information.

Specifically, digital media is becoming increasingly more important within the agricultural industry. In 2014, the ABM Agri Media Council conducted a study to determine media trends within the agricultural industry. Of the 1,029 respondents who completed the study, 43% reported they used agricultural-related websites on a weekly basis—an increase from 40% in 2012 (ABM Agri Media Council, 2014). Furthermore, the use of agricultural-related websites on a mobile device increased from 16% to 23%, use of agricultural-related mobile apps increased from 12% to 20%, and use of agricultural-related social media increased from 9% to 12% (ABM Agri Media Council, 2014). Despite the increase in digital media use, a majority of respondents (81%) continued to use traditional print media outlets on a weekly basis (ABM Agri Media

Council, 2014). Additionally, 63% of respondents under the age of 45 were more likely to use digital media channels versus 46% of respondents between the ages of 45 to 65. Although traditional media is prominent in the agricultural industry, digital media channels will continue to gain importance as the younger generation of agriculturalists embrace the digital marketing era (ABM Agri Media Council, 2014).

The Digital Generation

Currently, the largest subset of the U.S. population is comprised of individuals born between 1980 and 2000 (Millennials Coming of Age, n.d.). Ninety-two million (Millennials Coming of Age, n.d.) children of baby boomers and late generation Xers are gaining tremendous attention for their online activity and constant need for immediacy of information. Millennials, described as optimistic (Johnson & Romanello, 2005), confident (Howe & Strauss, 2000), and tech-savvy (Hartman & McCambridge, 2011), are “predicted to be the next great generation” (Pardue & Morgan, 2008, p. 74).

Millennials continue to dominate college classrooms. Currently, the more than 20.4 million millennial college students in America have a spending power of \$417 billion (SheerID, 2014). With a great buying power, college students are an important segment of the millennial generation because they are beginning to build their buying preferences but and behaviors as independent consumers (SheerID, 2014). Thus, millennial college students have the potential to change the dynamics of the U.S. economy (Millennials Coming of Age, 2016).

College students spend a majority of their money online (SheerID, 2014) and are more likely to purchase products from companies that have a social media presence

(Millennials Coming of Age, n.d.; Sago, 2010). In fact, SheerID (2014) reported that 80% of college students said that the best way to reach them is online, via social media. Congruently, in 2011, college students spent \$16 billion shopping online (SheerID, 2014), confirming that when making purchasing decisions millennials would rather buy products online (Millennials Coming of Age, n.d.; SheerID, 2014) and stay connected.

According to a 2015 study conducted by the American Press Institute, 51% of millennials claimed they are always online, 39% claimed they balance online and offline activity, and only 10% claimed they are always offline. From news updates to staying in touch with friends, millennials use social networking sites for just about anything (Smith, 2011, November 15) and spend at least 18 hours per day online (Taylor, 2014, March 10). Duggan et al. (2015, January 9) reported millennials are active on at least three social media sites and in 2014 millennials were most active on Facebook (75.4%), Instagram (41.3%), and Snapchat (32.9%) (Lipsman, 2014, August 8). Although Facebook is the leading social media app amongst millennials, only 16% of active Facebook users are between the ages of 18 and 24, in comparison to 45% of Snapchatters (Hoelzel, 2015, June 29).

Snapchat is gaining attention because it has, quite impressively, risen to the forefront of the social networking industry in a relatively short amount of time (The World's Billionaires, n.d.). Co-founded in 2011 by Evan Spiegel and Bobby Murphy (The World's Billionaires, n.d.), Snapchat has not only established itself as a leader within the industry but also obtained mainstream success (Lipsman, 2014, August 8) after only three years on the market. Snapchat is currently valued at \$16 billion (The

World's Billionaires, 2015) and attains more than 100 million views, monthly (Cicero, 2015). Most of the platform's success can be attributed to the application's ability to provide viewers with perspective, information presented in real-time, and an outlet to express themselves (Advertising Overview and FAQ, n.d.). Because 38% of millennials choose to communicate information about a brand via social media (Millennials Coming of Age, n.d.), Snapchat is receiving attention not only from its millennial users but also the brands targeting them (Wasserman, 2016, January 13).

Social, connected, and hungry for an experience. An increase in social media use amongst millennials has shifted how consumers talk about a brand (Millennials Coming of Age, n.d.; Sago, 2010). Generational differences aside, successful word of mouth communication will remain the key to a brand's success (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 2006). Millennial consumers choose to express their satisfaction and dissatisfaction with a brand by posting their experience online (KRC Research, 2008), bringing traditional word-of-mouth communication to a new level. Knowing that online content never *really* goes away, a few bad reviews could be devastating to a brand's brand community.

Brand communities are non-geographically bound social organizations that bring together followers of a brand (Devasagayam, Buff, Aurand, & Judson, 2010; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Based on social relationships among followers of a brand (Devasagayam et al., 2010), brand communities are heavily influenced by the content their followers share with others. Generally speaking, the millennial generation thrives from sharing their experiences, both positive and negative (KRC Research, 2008).

Unlike their predecessors, millennials expect an experience in many aspects of life—including food (Carman, 2013, October 22).

Millennials are more passionate about food than previous generations, and 50% identify themselves as “foodies” (Carman, 2013, October 22). Foodies are passionate not only about food but also about sharing their food experience (Carman, 2013, October 22; Bratskeir, 2015, August 18). Unlike their predecessors, millennials expect convenience and flexibility from their food experience (Bratskeir, 2015, August 18). Moreover, they are very health conscious, willing to pay the price to eat healthy, and less likely to spend their money on processed foods (Pinsker, 2015, August 14). According to PMA Research and Development (2014), millennials are interested in foods that are fresh, healthy, and easy to prepare.

Fresh produce campaigns targeted to millennials. Knowing millennials are health conscious and willing to pay the price to eat healthy, the fresh produce industry has recently focused their marketing efforts on targeting millennials using social media (D. Almy, personal communication, April 21, 2015). Fresh produce brands across the country are beginning to embrace the digital advertising dynamic by implementing social media tactics into several of their active promotion campaigns. These tactics, geared toward millennials, are especially present in the Avocados From Mexico and FNV campaigns. Such campaign advertisements can be found on several social media platforms, including Facebook[®], Twitter[®], Instagram[®], and Pinterest[®].

Avocados From Mexico was formed in 2013 as a marketing campaign to represent the Mexican Hass Avocados Importers Association and The Association of

Growers and Packers of Avocados From Mexico (About AFM, n.d.). Currently, Avocados From Mexico is responsible for 60% of the U.S. avocado market and during 2014 to 2015 the marketing group yielded a media impact of 1.6 billion. Also, in 2014, the U.S. imported roughly 1.8 trillion pounds of avocados from Mexico (About AFM, n.d.). Located in Irving, Texas, Avocados From Mexico is “rapidly blazing trails within the produce category” (About AFM, n.d., para. 9). With much of its advertisements delivered over digital platforms, Avocados From Mexico has an established presence on social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter and aims to “connect with a variety of consumer groups” (About AFM, n.d., para. 9).

In 2015, Victors and Spoils advertising agency launched the FNV campaign in association with the Partnership for a Healthier America and First Lady Michelle Obama’s *Let’s Move!* initiative (Fresh Fruit Portal, 2015). Backed by the Produce Marketing Association, the goal of the FNV campaign was to start a conversation about fruits and vegetables (Fresh Fruit Portal, 2015). FNV is geared toward promoting fresh fruits and vegetables through digital platforms using pro-bono celebrity endorsements (Sell Out, n.d.; Fresh Fruit Portal, 2015). With a presence on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, the FNV campaign attempts to reach its target audience through appealing graphics and humorous memes. The FNV campaign encourages consumers to “sell out” (Sell Out, n.d., para. 1) for fruits and vegetables by signing an online contract. While not legally binding, the contract allows consumers to be connected with the brand and share their commitment to eat fresh among several social media platforms, again placing fruits and vegetables at the center of the conversation.

Conceptual Framework

In 1898, E. St. Elmo Lewis claimed that effective advertising should “attract attention, maintain interest, create desire, and get action” (Strong, 1925, p. 76). Lewis developed the first-known model used to evaluate advertising effectiveness, the attention-interest-desire-action (AIDA) model (Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999). Lewis’ (1898) model continues to maintain importance in the advertising realm. According to Strong (1925), the model represents “four states of consciousness which must pass through the prospect before he will buy” (p. 76). In other words, the AIDA model is a hierarchy-of-effects model because it is a step-by-step process with an advertisement first being noticed, then creating interest and desire among consumers before prompting the consumer to act (Wells et al., 2006). According to Lewis (1898), if consumers are prompted to act after an advertisement grabs their attention, maintains their interest, and increases their desire for a product, the advertisement was successful

Along the same lines, another well-known model used to evaluate advertising effectiveness is the think-feel-do model. Vaughn (1980) believed that consumers’ purchase decisions are based on their thoughts, feelings, and level of involvement. In turn, he applied this model to advertising by developing a four-quadrant matrix to analyze advertisement effectiveness (Vaughn, 1980). The quadrants were (a) informative, (b) effective, (c) habit formation, and (d) self-satisfaction. He included two continuums to assist in the analysis—thinking and feeling and high and low involvement. All of these components come together to create a model grounded in “four potentially major goals in advertisement strategy” (Vaughn, 1980, p. 30).

According to the think-feel-do model, advertisements should be informative, be affective, be habit forming, or promote self-satisfaction (Vaughn, 1980).

Although both of the models mentioned previously are well-documented and have paved the way for future advertising research, Wells et al. (2006) noted a model was needed that included “other critical objectives that [advertising] professionals use in their work—such as *persuasion* and *association*” (p. 103) was needed. *Persuasion* and *association* come together with *perception*, *affective/emotion*, *behavior*, and *cognition* to create the facets model of effective advertising. As depicted in Table 1, six consumer responses converge to create an overall advertising message. Each response is made up of several components, outlined in Table 1, that contribute to the advertising message.

Table 1
Aspects of Wells et al.’s (2006) Facets Model of Effective Advertising

Facet	Facet Aspects
Perception	Exposure; selection and attention; interest and relevance; awareness; and recognition
Cognition	Information, cognitive learning, differentiation, and recall
Affective/Emotion	Liking, emotions, resonance
Association	Symbolism, conditional learning, brand image, and personality
Persuasion	Attitudes, argument, involvement, motivation, influence, conviction, and loyalty
Behavior	Try, buy, repeat buy, visit, call, click, refer, and advocate

Note: Adapted from Wells et al.’s (2006) facets model of effective advertising in *Advertising Principles and Practice* (p. 104), Prentice Hall.

The first facet of the model is *perception*. Wells et al. (2006) defined perception as “the process by which we receive information through our five senses and assign meaning to it” (p. 104). By assigning meaning to information, information becomes relatable (Well et al., 2006). Perception is comprised of five components (a) exposure, (b) selection and attention, (c) interest and relevance, (d) awareness, and (e) recognition. Perception is created by the ability of an advertisement to make contact, create stopping power, create pulling power, make an impression, and cause the consumer to make a mental note (Wells et al., 2006). Consumers must first perceive an advertisement before the remaining responses can occur (Wells et al., 2006). Therefore, an advertisements effectiveness solely depends on whether or not it was noticed by the consumer.

Once an advertisement is noticed, the consumer then has to process it. *Cognition*, the second facet, refers to “how consumers respond to information, learn, and understand something” (Wells et al., 2006, p. 106). Consumers’ responses are based on past experiences and prior knowledge using information that is stored in memory and recalled when needed (Wells et al., 2006). Consumers process information based on (a) needs, (b) information, (c) learning, (d) differentiation, and (e) recall (Wells et al., 2006). Effective advertisements will match the products’ features to consumers needs, provide facts about these features, create general understanding of differences among similar products, and cause consumers to recall information from memory (Wells et al., 2006).

Affective/emotional, the next facet, stems from a consumers “feelings about something” (Wells et al., 2006). Unlike cognitive responses that use existing information and past experiences, *affective* responses use emotion and do not have much thought

behind them. Even so, four components contribute to the *affective/emotional* response: (a) wants, (b) emotions, (c) liking, and (d) resonance (Wells et al., 2006). These components effect the way consumers feel about the advertisement by creating desire, affecting existing feelings, creating positive feelings, and creating appeal (Wells et al., 2006).

Association refers to “communication through symbolism” (Wells et al., 2006. p. 110). Through *association*, consumers are able to make symbolic connections between a brand and its characteristics and personality (Wells et al., 2006). However, *association* does not rely solely on symbolism. Additionally, conditioned learning and brand transformation help consumers apply symbolic meaning to a brand, create links to a brand through repetition, and create meaning for a brand (Wells et al., 2006). If the advertisement is successful, consumers will establish a connection with the brand and, as a result, the product being advertised will stand-out and be seen as unique (Wells et al., 2006). In other words, the brand becomes meaningful to the consumer and is transformed. This brand transformation is “created almost exclusively by advertising” (Wells et al., 2006, p. 111).

Once consumers make a connection with a brand, the goal of advertising is to persuade them to “believe or do something” (Wells et al., 2006, p. 113). *Persuasion* aims to change consumers’ attitudes and behaviors through arguments and involvement (Wells et al., 2006). Consumers are persuaded to act through strong reasoning, arguments, and engagement through involvement (Wells et al., 2006). Additional components of *persuasion* including motivation, influence, conviction and preference,

and loyalty provide consumers with incentive to respond to the advertisement while creating agreement and satisfaction with the product in question (Wells et al., 2006).

Last, but not least, *behavior* causes consumers to express “action of some kind” (Wells et al., 2006, p. 116)—the end goal of advertising. *Behavior* has four components: (a) try, (b) buy, (c) contact, and (d) prevention (Wells et al., 2006). These components initiate action by causing the consumer to try the product, purchase the product, and respond to the product while discouraging negative behaviors (Wells et al., 2006). However, consumers would not be able to act without the other responses discussed previously. Thus, every facet of the facets model of effective advertising is equally important (Wells et al., 2006).

Problem Statement

Obesity is a prevalent problem in America. In an effort to combat the obesity problem, the fresh produce industry has focused its marketing efforts on providing access to and promoting fresh fruits and vegetables (D. Almy, personal communication, April 21, 2015). For the purposes of this study, promotion was further investigated. Specifically, fresh produce promotion materials targeted to the millennial generation.

The millennial generation is of particular interest because they (a) have great buying power (Millennials Coming of Age, n.d.), (b) are changing the dynamics of advertising, and (c) will raise the next generation. Positive and intentional fresh produce advertisements, targeted to the Millennial generation, could potentially change millennial consumers’ buyer behavior to include fresh produce. Over time, as millennials begin to incorporate fresh produce into their diet, they will begin to lead healthier

lifestyles. It is important for the fresh produce industry to understand how to best market fresh produce to millennials in an effort to encourage them to lead healthier lifestyles, translate their lifestyle to their future children, and perhaps, address the current obesity problem in America.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to identify millennial college students' perceptions of digital fresh produce advertisements. Three research objectives guided this study.

1. Describe students' perceptions and consumption of media.
 - 1.1. How do students consume media?
 - 1.2. How do students perceive social media?
2. Describe students' perceptions, buying habits, and consumption of fresh produce.
 - 2.1. Why do students purchase fresh produce?
 - 2.2. Why do students consume fresh produce?
3. Describe students' perceptions of digital fresh produce advertisements.
 - 3.1. How do students perceive paid advertisements used in active fresh produce advertising campaigns?
 - 3.2. How do students perceive unpaid advertisements used in active fresh produce advertising campaigns?
 - 3.3. How do students perceive endorsed advertisements used in active fresh produce advertising campaigns?

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on understanding college students' perceptions of advertisements set forth by the fresh produce industry. The scope of this study will be limited to two courses offered in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M University. *Design for Agricultural Media* and *Food and Agricultural Sales* are upper-level, undergraduate courses focusing on teaching advanced practices and principles within their respective disciplines. Limited to students classified as *junior*, *senior*, or *graduate*, these courses were chosen because, upon completion of the course, students' enrolled will obtain a specialized vocabulary and valuable knowledge base in principles related to designing, marketing, and selling.

Context of Study

Design for Agricultural Media focuses on teaching students the principles and practices of agricultural media. As a requirement of the course, students complete a brand guide for a company of their choice. Using the appropriate design software, students are required to create a logo and logotype for the company as well as an advertisement and brochure for a product or service featured within the company. Upon conclusion of the course, students have an increased understanding of how to effectively communicate and connect with a target audience. Additionally, students not only understand but also can apply advanced design principles—layout, functionality, and flow—to their work.

Food and Agricultural Sales focuses on teaching the principles and practices of professional business-to-business selling. The main requirement of the course is

completion and delivery of a marketing presentation for an agricultural product or service. Using the selling techniques learned in lecture, students are required to deliver the presentation in front of peers and industry professionals. Upon completion of the course, students can identify an individual's buyer type, social style, and adoption category. Additionally, because the course covers the promotional aspect of the selling process, students are able to understand the importance of selling aids, such as advertisements, to completing the sale.

Assumptions of the Study

This study relied on several students within the Texas A&M University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, specifically, students enrolled in *Design for Agricultural Media* and *Food and Agricultural Sales*. It was assumed that the students who participated in this study had a basic knowledge and understanding of key marketing and design principles. It was also assumed that students used their knowledge of marketing and design principles to answer questions about advertisements featured in this study. Additionally, the primary researcher was the teaching assistant for *Design for Agricultural Media* and enrolled in *Food and Agricultural Sales*. Thus, her involvement with the two courses yielded potential for teacher-student and student-student relationships. To avoid coercion, the researcher remained professional and objective when interacting with students. Because of the researcher's background as a graphic designer, she had an advanced knowledge of graphic design principles and software used to create digital and print advertisements prior to this study.

When selecting advertisements for use in this study, the researcher remained objective and followed strict selection guidelines. Only computer-generated graphics posted on social media between February 25, 2015 and November 30, 2015 were chosen. Specifically, all advertisements had to include the campaign logo and/or logotype and a picture of the produce being advertised. Paid advertisements had to indicate “sponsored” or “sponsored by” on the post and endorsed advertisements had to include a famous or local celebrity spokesperson.

Limitation of the Study

Students used in this study were intentionally chosen based on their specialized vocabulary and expert knowledge of design and marketing principles. Because this study was conducted using Texas A&M University students, the results of this study may not be representative of college students as a whole. Therefore, the findings of this study are only applicable to the population included in this study.

Significance of the Study

An extensive review of literature did not reveal any studies detailing consumers’ response to promotion tactics set forth by the fresh produce industry. The findings of this study can add to the literature base needed to provide fresh produce industry professionals with adequate descriptions of millennial college students’ perceptions of fresh produce advertisements. Additionally, the conclusions can provide a starting point for best practices to use when marketing and promoting fresh produce to a specialized segment of the millennial generation.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

To ensure triangulation and completeness (Bryman, 2012), this study was divided in two parts and utilized both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The mixed-method approach (Greene & Hall, 2010) was chosen because Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, and Sechrest (1966) suggested quantitative results are enhanced by qualitative findings. Additionally, because the over-arching goal of this study is to determine college students' perceptions of fresh produce advertisements, homogeneous sampling was used to “bring focus to [the] sample, reduce variation, [and] simplify analysis” to “facilitate group interviewing” (Patton, 2005, p. 3).

Two methods were used for data collection: quantitative questionnaire and qualitative focus groups. The quantitative questionnaire provided a better understanding of the study population and set the stage for four follow-up qualitative focus groups. Students ($n=22$) were assigned to a focus group based on their involvement with social media and fresh produce. Focus groups were divided up by (a) high and low involvement with social media, (b) high involvement with fresh produce, (c) low involvement with fresh produce, and (d) mixed (high social media involvement and high fresh produce involvement). Focus groups were used to discuss paid, unpaid, and endorsed fresh produce advertisements.

Institutional Review Board

Before data collection could take place, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the mechanics of this study. An IRB application was submitted through Texas A&M University to ensure all documents involving human interaction between the researcher and student participants were stamped and approved before data collection took place. Consent forms, recruitment scripts, questionnaire, and focus group instruments were submitted for approval. Texas A&M University IRB granted approval on October 5, 2015 (IRB2015-0621D; Appendix A).

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted prior to data collection to test the mechanics of this study and the mixed-method approach. Students enrolled in an entry-level agricultural communications and journalism course were invited to participate. All participants were underclassmen and female. The online questionnaire was sent out one week prior to the focus group date. In total, 40 students completed the questionnaire and 10 students agreed to participate in a follow-up focus group. In addition to the participants, a moderator and one notetaker was present. Refreshments were provided.

The focus group lasted approximately 60 minutes and was divided into two parts (1) Snapchat approach and (2) open-ended discussion. During the focus group, students were shown a total of six advertisements, selected from active fresh produce campaigns, via a PowerPoint presentation. Students recorded their responses to the Snapchat approach on colored and labeled index cards. During the discussion portion, notes were taken by the moderator and notetaker to record students' responses. Data collected

during the pilot study was not included in the results portion of this study. However, the pilot study provided beneficial insight that was used to improve to the overall delivery of this study. Upon completion of the pilot study, few adjustments were made to the questionnaire to streamline the delivery process and to the focus group to improve consistency and flow. For example, doodle polls were sent out to confirm agreeable times for the focus group meetings, an extra notetaker was included in the focus groups to record non-verbal cues, and nametags were given to participants with a number that served as their identification for the focus group.

Quantitative Research Design

Often referred to as a deductive approach to research, quantitative research “embodies a view of social reality as an external, objective reality” (Bryman, 2012, p. 36). Online self-completion questionnaires are a common form of quantitative research (Bryman, 2012) and can be used to objectively attach numbers to observations (Buddenbaum & Novak, 2001). According to Lindlof (1995), questionnaires are implemented into research designs to “reveal the distribution of behaviors, attitudes, and attributes in a population” (p. 121). Thus, a quantitative questionnaire was used to gain a better understanding of this study’s population.

Population. The population for part one of this study was chosen conveniently from an easily accessible source (Baker, 1990), Texas A&M University. Specifically, all students enrolled in *Design for Agricultural Media* and *Food and Agricultural Sales* for the fall 2015 semester were recruited to participate in this study because they were exposed to advertising and marketing principles and brought a valued knowledge base to

the study. For the fall 2015 semester, both courses were divided up into two sections. *Design for Agricultural Media* included a face-to-face section and an online section; whereas, *Food and Agricultural Sales* included two face-to-face sections. Combined, 175 students were recruited to participate in this study.

The only qualification students were required to meet in order to participate in this study was they had to be enrolled in *Design for Agricultural Media* and/or *Food and Agricultural Sales*; no restrictions were placed on gender, ethnicity, age, or classification of participants. Of the 175 students recruited to participate in this study, 143 agreed to participate. The majority of participants were white, female upperclassmen between the ages of 20 to 24. Although several majors within the Texas A&M University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences were represented, the majority of participants were agricultural economics or agricultural communications and journalism majors.

Data collection. Recruitment took place during class time and both instructors approved the recruitment process (Appendix B/C). Per the instructors' permission, the recruitment script was delivered in both courses on October 14, 2015. The recruitment script (Appendix D) described the background of the primary researcher, gave a short description of the research study, and provided a rationale for the recruitment of selected students. An email, including a condensed version of the recruitment script and a link to the online questionnaire (Appendix E), was sent to all students listed on the fall 2015 rosters for *Design for Agricultural Media* and *Food and Agricultural Sales*. Thus, all enrolled students, had an equal opportunity to participate in this study.

Upon opening the recruitment email, students were directed to Qualtrics. Because Qualtrics is offered at Texas A&M University, it was chosen as the medium of delivery for the quantitative portion of this study. The highly respected platform is not only user-friendly, but also accessible on most devices that have Wi-Fi capability (About Us, n.d.). Thus, students had the option to complete the questionnaire using a laptop, smartphone, or tablet. Even though students were reminded to bring their laptop to class on recruitment day, those who forgot, and did not have a smartphone, were able to complete the questionnaire using a computer in the open-access lab.

Students were asked to electronically sign a consent form (Appendix F), presented as question one on the questionnaire. The consent form provided a detailed description of the overall purpose of this study and contact information for the principal investigator. Students were given a few minutes to read over the consent form and were encouraged to ask questions for clarification. Questions asked in class were addressed immediately. Students ($n = 143$) then independently completed an online questionnaire. The questionnaire (Appendix G) consisted of 40 questions and was designed based on literature reviewed. To aid in data collection, questions were divided up into three sections (a) demographics, (b) media consumption and perceptions of media, and (c) fresh produce buying habits and consumption. Multiple questions were presented to students at one time (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). On average, the questionnaire took eight minutes to complete.

Demographic questions such as gender, age, ethnicity, and marital status were designed using classification categories reported by the U.S. Census Bureau (2011-a;

2011-b). Major and classification questions were designed to align with Texas A&M University academics. *Design for Agricultural Media* and *Food and Agricultural Sales* are both required courses within their respective degree programs within the Texas A&M University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Students were given the option to choose between eight undergraduate majors within the College including (a) agricultural business, (b) agricultural communications and journalism, (c) agricultural economics, (d) agricultural leadership and development, (e) agricultural science, (f) agricultural systems management, (g) animal science, and (h) university studies (Academics Undergraduate Programs, n.d.). To accommodate for less-common majors and students outside the College, students also had the opportunity to choose “other” and input their own major via a text response.

Section two asked a series of questions regarding engagement with and consumption of different media platforms, particularly social media. To confirm that millennials obtain most of their information from online platforms, specifically social media (Smith, 2011, November 15), students were asked to provide their primary source for daily news content/information and their primary source for content/information about fresh produce. Students were then given the opportunity to identify all social media applications with which they actively engage. Engagement categories were determined based on survey questions reported by the Pew Research Center (2014) and social media data reported by Duggan et al. (2015, January 9). To determine how students engage with social media, participants were asked to provide their preferred

device to use for browsing social media (Smith, Rainie, & Zickuhr, 2011, July 18) and their preferred smartphone operating system (Desilver, 2013, June 29), if applicable.

Knowing that millennials spend more than half of their day consuming media online via social media (Taylor, 2014, March 10) one could assume that they are heavily influenced by the content they view online; but, how much? To answer this question, students were also asked in section two to rate five different social media platforms based accuracy, credibility, and trustworthiness of shared content.

Lastly, section three covered questions designed to gage how often and why students' purchase and consume fresh fruits and vegetables. For the purposes of this study, fruits and vegetables were considered two separate, but equal, entities. Meaning, students were asked specifically if they ate fresh fruit and specifically if they ate fresh vegetables. Therefore, allowing students who only eat fruit and not vegetables (and vice versa) to accurately respond to each question without combining all produce together and possibly decreasing the accuracy of responses to questions regarding serving size. The appropriate serving sizes for fruits and vegetables were determined based on a 2400 (female) to 2800 (male) caloric diet using the 2010 dietary guidelines provided by USDA.

Data analysis. The questionnaire served two objectives in this study: (1) gain a better understanding of the study population and (2) assign participants to follow-up group discussions about fresh produce advertisements. To complete objective one, all demographic questions were analyzed. To complete objective two, six questions were

analyzed (Table 2) and used to determine students' high and low involvement with social media and fresh produce.

Table 2
Questions Analyzed to Determine High and Low Involvement with Social Media and Fresh Produce

No.	Question	Response Options
11	Do you use social media?	Yes; No
12	Which of these social media outlets do you use? (Check all that apply.)	Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, and/or Facebook
23	Do you eat fresh fruit?	Yes; No
24	Think about the last week. On the day that you ate the most fresh fruit, how many pieces of fruit did you eat?	Slider scale: 0 to 10
27	Do you eat fresh vegetables?	Yes; No
28	Think about the last week. On the day that you ate the most fresh vegetables, how many servings of vegetables did you eat? (Serving size = ½ cup)	Slider scale: 0 to 10

Note: Question 12 response options were limited to social media outlets pertinent to this study; serving sizes used in questions 24 and 28 were adapted from “Dietary Guidelines for Americans,” by USDA, 2010, retrieved from www.dietaryguidelines.gov; see Appendix G for a complete version of the online questionnaire export.

Questionnaire data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel to determine descriptive statistics. Questionnaire results were numerically reported using percentages and frequencies (Buddenbaum & Novak, 2001).

Qualitative Research Design

Utilizing an inductive approach to research, qualitative research “embodies a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals’ creation”

(Bryman, 2012, p. 36). Qualitative research involves “in-depth, open-ended interviews; direct observations; and written documents” (Patton, 2005, p. 2). Focus groups, defined as “small, temporary community[ies], formed for the purpose of the collaborative enterprise of discovery” (Templeton, 1987, p. 4), were used to facilitate discussions about fresh produce advertisements. According to Templeton (1987), focus groups are one of the most commonly used forms of qualitative marketing research and are composed of multiple individuals sharing their knowledge about a particular subject matter (Morgan, 1997) or “phenomena of interest” (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990, p. 15).

For the purposes of this study, focus groups were used to discuss six advertisements selected from three active fresh produce promotion campaigns. Detailed notes were taken, transcribed, and analyzed to determine students’ perceptions of paid, unpaid, and endorsed fresh produce advertisements.

Sample. The sample for part two of this study was purposefully selected from students who responded to the quantitative questionnaire ($n = 143$). Based on their responses to certain questions on the questionnaire, students’ were divided up into four recruitment categories (a) high social media involvement, (b) low social media involvement, (c) high fresh produce involvement, and (d) low fresh produce involvement. Once all students were placed into an involvement category, Doodle polls were distributed to gauge the best time for respondents to meet. In total, four Doodle polls were created and distributed—one for each involvement category.

Involvement categories were determined based on students’ responses to the questions previously outlined in part one, Table 1. Specifically, social media

involvement was determined based on students' response to question 12, "Which of these social media outlets do you use? (Check all that apply)." Students' had the option to select (a) Twitter, (b) Instagram, (c) Pinterest, (d) Snapchat, and/or (e) Facebook. Because Duggan et al. (2015, January 9) stated 52% of adult social media users are active on at least two social media sites, students who were active on three or more social media sites could be categorized as highly involved with social media. Thus, students who checked two or less boxes in response to question 12, were categorized as low social media involvement. In turn, fresh produce involvement was determined based on students' response to questionnaire questions 24 and 28 (see Table 1). Based on a 2400 to 2800 calorie diet, students should eat at least three servings of fruit and three servings of vegetables per day (USDA, 2010). Thus, students who used the slider to select "3" or less on questions 24 and 28 were classified as low fresh produce involvement. Students who used the slider to select "4" or more on questions 24 and 28 were classified as high fresh produce involvement.

Once questionnaire respondents were placed in their respective involvement category, individual Doodle polls were sent one week prior to the projected focus group dates. Each poll included several 60-minute time slots for different days during the following week. Students were asked to check all time slots that best fit their schedules. Reminder emails were sent until the maximum number of intended participants was reached. Focus groups consisted of four to six participants because Templeton (1987) suggested that smaller groups are "usually orderly and controllable" (p. 30). Although only 22 students from the original population ($N=175$) were selected to participate in

part two of this study, all questionnaire respondents were recruited to allow for cancellations (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990).

Data collection. To achieve data saturation (Krueger & Casey, 2000), four focus groups were conducted. Focus groups were held November 11, 13, and 16, 2015, in the Texas A&M Agriculture and Life Sciences building. Participants, along with a moderator and two notetakers, were in attendance. The moderator, chosen based on the qualifications outlined by Buddenbaum and Novak (2001) and Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) was provided with a script (Appendix H) outlining the specific questions and topics to be covered during the focus group (Buddenbaum & Novak, 2001).

Upon arrival to the focus groups, students were provided a nametag with a number (1-7), which served as their identification for the remainder of the focus group. Students also signed a consent form (Appendix F) and were provided with a writing utensil and six lined and labeled index cards. For record-keeping purposes, each colored index card represented a specific advertisement: (A) red, (B) blue, (C) green, (D) purple, (E) orange, and (F) yellow. Fruit and vegetable trays and water were available.

Focus groups were divided up into two parts (1) Snapchat approach and (2) open-ended discussion; focus groups lasted approximately 60 minutes. Part one was implemented into the focus group design in an effort to increase engagement among participants and “warm up” participants for open-ended discussion. Part one was designed to emulate Snapchat because the social media app has been identified as a highly effective way to connect with millennials (Wasserman, 2016, January 13).

During part one, students were shown a series of paid, unpaid, and endorsed digital fresh produce advertisements selected from the Avocados From Mexico, California Avocados, and FNV campaigns. Advertisements were selected from the campaigns' Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and/or Facebook platforms. Because the FNV campaign launched in February 2015, only advertisements posted between February 25, 2015 and November 30, 2015 were selected. Selected advertisements had to be computer generated, considered a graphic, include campaign logos and/or logotypes, and an actual picture of the produce being advertised. Additionally, paid advertisements had to indicate "sponsored" or "sponsored by" on the post and endorsed advertisements had to include a celebrity (famous or local) spokesperson.

To emulate the Snapchat application, selected advertisements (Figure 1) were displayed for a total of 10 seconds, each. After 10 seconds, students were allowed 30 seconds to record the first five terms that came to their mind. Terms were recorded on index cards distributed at the beginning of the focus group.



Figure 1. Advertisements selected from active fresh produce advertising campaigns

To streamline the viewing process, advertisements were shown via a PowerPoint presentation (one slide per advertisement). To ensure students would only see an advertisement for 10 seconds, a blank slide was included after each advertisement slide. Once all six advertisements were shown, participants were given a “replay” option and allowed to take a few minutes to discuss the advertisements amongst themselves. Not all focus groups decided to partake in the replay option. However, those that chose to use their replay option were allowed to collectively choose one advertisement to be displayed for an additional 10 seconds. Students were also given an additional 30 seconds to review the original terms that came to their mind and make changes as necessary. Upon completion of part one, participants took a 10-minute break to stretch, enjoy refreshments, and regain their thoughts.

After the break, students were instructed to take their seats. Once all participants were seated, the moderator introduced part two of the focus group. During part two, students were allowed to view each advertisement again and were asked a series of open-ended questions about each advertisement (Table 3). Questions were designed to align with Wells et al.'s (2006) facets model of effective advertising. Questions one and two aligned with *perception*, questions three and four aligned with *affective/emotion*, question five aligned with *persuasion*, question six aligned with *behavior*, question seven aligned with *association*, and question eight aligned with *cognition*.

Table 3
Focus Group Questions

No.	Question	Facet Category
1	Have you ever seen this advertisement? If so, where?	Perception
2	What attracted your attention in this advertisement?	Perception
3	What did you like about this advertisement? Dislike?	Affective/Emotion
4	How does this advertisement make you feel?	Affective/Emotion
5	How does this advertisement motivate you to eat fresh produce?	Persuasion
6	How does this advertisement motivate you to purchase fresh produce?	Behavior
7	How would you connect this advertisement to an aspect of your life?	Association
8	What did you learn from this advertisement?	Cognition

Note: Questions were designed using Wells et al.'s (2006) facets model of effective advertising in *Advertising Principles and Practice* (p. 104), Prentice Hall; see Appendix H for a complete version of the moderator's script.

Students were allowed roughly eight minutes per advertisement to respond the series of questions outlined in Table 2. To ensure consistency of results, the moderator asked the same series of questions for each advertisement. Questions 1–4 were designed to gauge students' reaction to each advertisement and questions 5–8 were designed to gauge students' intended behavior or action, upon seeing the advertisements. Each student was given the opportunity to respond to each question. To ensure confidentiality, student responses were coded according to focus group assignment (1–4), involvement category (a–d), and nametag number (1–7). For example, 02.C.04 represented a high fresh produce involvement student labeled number four in the second focus group.

Data analysis. Field notes, collected from observations and interviews (Patton, 2005), were transcribed and analyzed using a content analysis approach. A “thematic analysis of text” (Trochim, 2001, p. 165) was used to determine common, reoccurring “themes, patterns, understandings, and insights” (Patton, 2005, p. 1) within the series of field notes collected. Prior to each focus group, notetakers were given a copy of the moderator’s script. The notetaker version of the script included extra white space under each question for comments. In addition, notetakers were given a college-ruled, spiral-bound notebook to allow for extra notetaking space. Notetakers were instructed to record notes based on the participants’ identification number on their nametag.

Upon conclusion of each focus group, field notes were collected, transcribed, and compiled into a single Microsoft Word document with each notetaker represented by a different color (red and blue). Transcription of all field notes resulted in a total of four Microsoft Word documents—one for each focus group. Further, transcribed notes from

each focus group were compiled by advertisement in a separate Microsoft Word document. The six Microsoft Word documents, containing transcribed notes from both part one and two of each focus group, were used to assist in data analysis. Additionally, Wells et al.'s (2006) facets model of effective advertising served as the analysis framework for this study and a detailed coding manual (Table 4) was created to operationally define the six facets.

Table 4
Coding Manual with Facet Category Descriptions

Facet	Description	Characteristic Examples
Perception	Ability to make contact with the advertisement by creating stopping power, pulling power, and causing consumers to make a mental note; terms used to describe the overall appearance of the advertisement	Design principles, functionality, flow, readability
Cognition	Response to the advertisement based on consumers past experiences and prior knowledge; terms used to describe consumers overall response to the advertisement based on their perception of the advertisement	Advertisement characteristics and message, appearance, interpretation
Affective/ Emotion	Overall emotions towards the advertisement without much thought behind them; terms used to describe consumers feelings about the advertisement	Emotions and feelings, positive or negative
Association	Ability to connect the advertisement to an aspect of the consumers' life; terms used to describe the connection made between consumers and the advertisement	Locations to eat, places to visit, recreational activities, hobbies

Table 4 continued

Facet	Description	Characteristic Examples
Persuasion	Attitudes and behaviors towards an advertisement; terms used to describe consumers motivation and influence to try/not try the product being advertised	Product descriptors including shelf life, taste, and appearance
Behavior	Willingness to express action of some kind; terms used to describe consumers willingness to go out and purchase the/similar products being advertised	Actions, behaviors, types of food, recipe ingredients
Other	Terms that are ambiguous to the six facets category	Terms that do not fit into the above categories

Note: Coding manual was created using Wells et al.'s (2006) facets model of effective advertising in *Advertising Principles and Practice* (p. 104), Prentice Hall; the six facet categories were operationally defined, according to the model, to align with the purposes of this study.

The coding manual was created by the primary researcher and used to categorize students' responses to the Snapchat approach. To ensure uniformity and accuracy of the coding manual, an additional coder was trained on the data coding procedure.

Independently, the primary data collector and additional coder categorized the data according to the coding manual. Krippendorff (1980) noted that content analyses are expected to be reliable. To ensure reliability of the coding process, the results were compared across coders. The comparison showed 210 of 287 matches between coders, resulting in an intercoder agreement of 0.73. Thus, a satisfactory (Westergaard, Nobel, & Walker, 1989) agreement between coders was reached.

Credibility and trustworthiness. Because qualitative studies include a large amount of data to analyze and are largely dependent upon the human element (Patton, 2002), trustworthiness is important. Trustworthiness was established through transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability was established through thick description of the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), dependability was established through data triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and confirmability was established using an audit trail (Halpern, 1983).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

To ensure triangulation and completeness, this study was divided in two parts and utilized a mixed-methods approach. Two methods were used for data collection: quantitative questionnaire and qualitative focus groups. The population for the quantitative portion of this study was chosen from Texas A&M University students enrolled in *Design for Agricultural Media* and *Food and Agricultural Sales* for the fall 2015 semester. Combined, a total of 175 students were recruited to participate in this study. Of the students recruited, 143 agreed to participate (82% response rate) and completed an online questionnaire administered through Qualtrics. The questionnaire was designed with two objectives in mind (1) to gain a better understanding of the study population and (2) assign respondents to follow-up group discussions about fresh produce advertisements. In total, 22 students selected from the questionnaire respondents ($n = 143$) agreed to participate in the follow up group discussions.

Questionnaire Demographics

Students' ($n = 143$) who completed the questionnaire were mostly white females between the ages of 20 and 21. Female students accounted for 54% of the respondents with 86% of respondents reported to be between the ages of 20 to 24. Other age categories, included 18 to 19, 25 to 29, 30 to 34, and 35 to 44, had one to two students in each category (Table 4). No respondents over the age of 45 were included in this study.

While the majority of respondents reported to be of White ethnic origin (88.1%; Table 5), reported ethnicities including Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Multi-racial were included.

Table 5
Questionnaire Respondents (n = 143) Gender, Age, and Ethnicity

Characteristic	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Female	77	54
Male	66	46
Age		
20–21	94	66
22–24	44	31
18–19	5	3
25–29	1	<1
30–34	1	<1
35–44	1	<1
Ethnicity		
White	126	88
Multi-racial	8	6
Hispanic	7	5
Asian	1	<1
Black	1	<1

Note: Percentage rounded to the nearest whole number; totals of percentages are not 100 for every characteristic because of rounding.

Overall, students ($n = 143$) represented 12 majors within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and two majors outside the College (Table 5). Because students were recruited from two required courses within the College, two majors

expectedly rose to the top: agricultural economics ($f = 47$) and agricultural communications and journalism ($f = 31$). Only two students identified themselves as underclassmen (freshman or sophomore) and four students' identified themselves as graduate students. Therefore, the majority of students' identified themselves as juniors and seniors (Table 6).

Table 6
Questionnaire Respondents (n = 143) Major and Classification

Characteristic	<i>f</i>	%
Major		
Agricultural economics	47	33
Agricultural communications and journalism	31	22
Animal science	19	13
Agricultural leadership and development	16	11
Agricultural systems management	11	8
Other	6	4
Agricultural science	4	3
Agricultural business	3	2
Agronomy	3	2
University studies	3	2
Classification		
Senior	82	57
Junior	55	39
Graduate	4	3
Underclassman	2	1

Note: Percentage rounded to the nearest whole number; *other* = dual majors and majors with less than three respondents.

The majority of respondents were single (98%) and living with roommates (84%). Only a few students ($f = 3$) were married, living with relatives ($f = 9$), or living with significant other ($f = 8$). When asked “Who makes the food purchasing decisions for your household?,” a majority of students (72%) selected “each person in the household makes their own food purchasing decisions” (Table 7).

Table 7
Questionnaire Respondents (n = 143) Marital Status, Household Type, and Food Purchasing Decisions

Characteristic	<i>f</i>	%
Marital Status		
Single	140	98
Married	3	2
Household Type		
Living with roommates	120	84
Living with relatives	9	6
Living with a significant other	8	6
Living alone	6	4
Who makes household food purchasing decisions?		
Each person does	103	72
I do	37	26
My relatives do	1	<1
My roommates do	1	<1
My significant other does	1	<1

Note: Percentage rounded to the nearest whole number; totals of percentages are not 100 for every characteristic because of rounding.

RO 1: Describe Students' Perceptions and Consumption of Media

1.1: How do students consume media? A majority of students reported using the Internet (50%) on a daily basis to receive general news. Social media (39%) was a close second (Table 8). When browsing social media, 76% of students reported they prefer to use a smartphone rather than a cellphone (16%); laptop (6%), desktop (1%), or tablet computer (<1%). In relation to information about fresh produce, the Internet (50%) and social media (22%) again rose to the top (Table 8). This time, TV (20%) was a close second. In addition, no students reported reading the newspaper daily for general news, however, some students (6%) reported the newspaper was their primary source for information about fresh produce.

Table 8
Students' (n =143) Daily Media Consumption

Primary Source	<i>f</i>	%
For news		
Internet	71	50
Social Media	56	39
TV	10	7
Radio	6	4
Newspaper	0	0
For information about fresh produce		
Internet	71	50
Social Media	32	22
TV	29	20
Newspaper	9	6
Radio	2	1

Note: Percentage rounded to the nearest whole number; totals of percentages are not 100 for every characteristic because of rounding.

A majority of students reported they receive general news as well as news and information about fresh produce from online platforms, including social media (Table 8). The three most popular social media applications amongst students were Facebook ($f = 135$), Snapchat ($f = 119$), and Instagram ($f = 117$; Table 9). The two least popular social media applications amongst students were Twitter ($f = 72$) and Pinterest ($f = 66$). Students reported actively engaging with Facebook ($f = 90$), Snapchat ($f = 87$), and Instagram ($f = 79$) several times per day compared to engaging with Twitter ($f = 17$) and Pinterest ($f = 9$) only one to two days per week (Table 9).

Table 9
Students' (n = 143) Engagement with Social Media

Application	Per Day		Per Week		Every Few Weeks	Less Often	Do Not Use
	Several Times	About Once	3-5 Days	1-2 Days			
Facebook	90	27	12	4	1	1	8
Snapchat	87	18	8	5	1	0	24
Instagram	79	21	9	4	4	0	26
Twitter	43	8	5	9	5	2	71
Pinterest	11	15	14	17	8	1	77

Note: Engagement categories represented by frequency of respondents.

1.2: How do students perceive social media? Students were asked to rate the social media platforms they engaged with based on a 1–5 rating scale (1 = low and 5 = high). The scale was used to determine students' perceptions of the accuracy, credibility, and trustworthiness of general information presented on social media (Table 10). Pinterest was deemed the most accurate ($M = 3.3$), credible ($M = 3.1$), and trustworthy

($M = 3.1$) social media source followed closely by Twitter ($M = 3.0$; $M = 2.7$; $M = 2.6$).

Of the five social media platforms, students reported that Snapchat was the least accurate ($M = 2.5$), Instagram was the least credible ($M = 2.4$), and Facebook was the least trustworthy ($M = 2.3$).

Table 10
Students' (n = 143) Perceptions of Social Media

Social Media Platform	Accurate		Credible		Trustworthy	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Pinterest	3.3	1.0	3.1	1.1	3.1	1.1
Twitter	3.0	1.0	2.7	1.1	2.6	1.1
Facebook	2.8	1.1	2.5	1.1	2.3	1.1
Instagram	2.8	1.1	2.4	1.1	2.4	1.1
Snapchat	2.5	1.4	2.5	1.4	2.4	1.3

Note: Mean and standard deviation rounded to the nearest tenth; students rated the different social media platforms based on a 1–5 rating scale (1 = low and 5 = high).

Students also reported that Pinterest and Twitter were the most accurate, credible, and trustworthy social media sources for information about fresh produce (Table 11). On the other hand, students reported that Snapchat was the least accurate ($M = 2.2$), credible ($M = 2.2$), and trustworthy ($M = 2.1$) source (Table 11), preceded by Instagram ($M = 2.5$; $M = 2.4$; $M = 2.3$).

Table 11

Students' (n = 143) Perceptions of Social Media in Relation to Fresh Produce

Social Media Platform	Accurate		Credible		Trustworthy	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Pinterest	3.3	1.1	3.1	1.0	3.1	1.1
Twitter	2.7	1.2	2.5	1.2	2.5	1.2
Facebook	2.6	1.1	2.5	1.1	2.5	1.1
Instagram	2.5	1.3	2.4	1.2	2.3	1.2
Snapchat	2.2	1.4	2.2	1.4	2.1	1.3

Note: Mean and standard deviation rounded to the nearest tenth; students rated the different social media platforms based on a 1–5 rating scale (1 = low and 5 = high).

RO 2: Describe Students Buying Habits and Consumption of Fresh Produce

2.1: Why do students consume fresh produce? Of the students who reported they consume fresh produce, 135 reported they consume fresh fruit and 133 students reported they consume fresh vegetables (Table 12). Students agreed they consume fresh fruit because fresh fruit is yummy ($f = 134$) and healthy ($f = 132$). Although several students reported that budget ($f = 24$) and accessibility ($f = 16$) were not key factors in their decision to eat fresh fruit, a majority of students agreed they eat fresh fruit because it is easily accessible to them ($f = 115$) and within their budget ($f = 97$). Students also agreed they eat fresh vegetables because fresh vegetables are easily accessible to them ($f = 118$) and within their budget ($f = 97$). However, the majority of students agreed they consume fresh vegetables because fresh vegetables are healthy ($f = 132$) rather than yummy ($f = 121$).

Table 12
Students Fresh Produce Consumption Habits

Reason	SA	A	N	D	SD
Students ($n = 135$) consume fresh fruit because fruit is					
Yummy	102	32	3	0	0
Healthy	97	35	3	0	0
Easily accessible	50	65	16	4	0
Within budget	38	59	24	14	0
Students ($n = 133$) consume fresh vegetables because vegetables are					
Healthy	97	35	1	0	0
Yummy	71	50	8	3	1
Easily accessible	61	57	9	6	0
Within budget	59	51	16	6	0

Note: Agreement categories (*SA* = strongly agree, *A* = agree, *N* = neutral, *D* = disagree, and *SD* = strongly disagree) represented by frequency of respondents; totals are not equal for some categories due to non-response.

2.2: Why do students purchase fresh produce? A total of 130 students reported they purchase fresh fruit and 129 students reported they purchase fresh vegetables (Table 13). Parallel to students' fresh produce eating habits, students agreed they purchase fresh fruit fruits and vegetables because they are yummy ($f = 130$; $f = 127$) and healthy ($f = 129$; $f = 122$). Students also reported that accessibility and budget are not key factors in their decision to purchase fresh fruit ($f = 12$; $f = 20$) and fresh vegetables ($f = 9$; $f = 14$).

Table 13
Students Fresh Produce Purchasing Habits

Reason	SA	A	N	D	SD
Students ($n = 130$) purchase fruit because fruit is					
Yummy	100	30	0	0	0
Healthy	92	37	1	0	0
Easily accessible	54	59	12	4	0
Within budget	42	54	20	13	1
Students ($n = 129$) purchase vegetables because vegetables are					
Healthy	95	32	2	0	0
Yummy	72	50	3	3	1
Easily accessible	58	58	9	3	1
Within budget	51	56	14	8	0

Note: Agreement categories (*SA* = strongly agree, *A* = agree, *N* = neutral, *D* = disagree, and *SD* = strongly disagree) represented by frequency of respondents.

Focus Group Demographics

From the questionnaire respondents ($n = 143$), a total of 22 students agreed to participate in follow-up group discussions about fresh produce advertisements. Parallel to the study population, focus group participants were mostly white (86%) females (77%) between the ages of 20 and 21 (77%; Table 14).

Table 14
Focus Group Participants ($n = 22$) Gender, Age, and Ethnicity

Characteristic	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Female	17	77

Table 14 continued

Characteristic	<i>f</i>	%
Male	5	23
Age		
20-21	17	77
22-24	5	23
Ethnicity		
White	19	86
Multi-racial	2	9
Hispanic	1	5

Note: Percentage rounded to the nearest whole number.

Focus groups were comprised of mostly agricultural communications and journalism students (46%). Other majors within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences were represented less frequently. Agricultural leadership and development and agricultural systems management were each represented by three students. Most participants were classified as a junior (55%) or senior (41%). No underclassmen and only one graduate student participated in the focus groups (Table 15).

Table 15
Focus Group Participants (n = 22) Major and Classification

Characteristic	<i>f</i>	%
Major		
Agricultural communications and journalism	10	46
Other	6	27

Table 15 continued

Characteristic	<i>f</i>	%
Agricultural leadership and development	3	14
Agricultural systems management	3	14
Classification		
Junior	12	55
Senior	9	41
Graduate	1	5

Note: Percentage rounded to the nearest whole number; *other* = dual majors and majors with less than three students each.

Parallel to the population, focus group participants were mostly single (96%) and living with roommates (82%; Table 16). One student reported being married, and one student reported living alone, another student reported living with relatives, and two students reported living with a significant other. When it comes to food purchasing decisions for the household, a majority of students (77%) reported that each person in the household makes their own food purchasing decisions and a small portion of students (23%) reported they were the sole decision makers.

Table 16
Focus Group Participants (n = 22) Marital Status, Household Type, and Food Purchasing Decisions

Characteristic	<i>f</i>	%
Marital Status		
Single	21	96

Table 16 continued

Characteristic	<i>f</i>	%
Married	1	5
Household Type		
Living with roommates	18	82
Living with Significant Other	2	9
Living Alone	1	5
Living with Relatives	1	5
Who makes household food purchasing decisions?		
Each person does	17	77
I do	5	23

Note: Percentage rounded to the nearest whole number.

Focus Group Assignments

All focus group participants reported they use social media. To determine high and low involvement with social media, students were asked to report the number of social media applications they use. Most students (91%) reported they use at least three or more social media accounts. To determine high and low involvement with fresh produce, students were first asked if they consume fruits and vegetables and then asked to report the daily number of servings they consume. All participants responded “yes” to eating fresh fruit and 21 students responded “yes” to eating fresh vegetables. Most participants reported eating four or more (54%) pieces of fruit per week compared to two to three (50%) servings of vegetables per week (Table 17).

Table 17
Focus Group Participants (n = 22) High and Low Involvement with Social Media and Fresh Produce

Question	<i>f</i>	%
Do you use social media?		
Yes	22	100
No	0	0
Number of social media outlets used.		
3–5	20	91
0–2	2	9
Do you eat fresh fruit?		
Yes	22	100
No	0	0
Pieces of fruit eaten per week.		
2–3	8	36
4–5	6	27
6+	6	27
0–1	2	9
Do you eat fresh vegetables?		
Yes	21	96
No	1	5
Servings of vegetables eaten per week.		
2–3	11	50
4–5	7	32
0–1	2	9
6+	2	9

Note: Percentage rounded to the nearest whole number.

The findings presented in Table 17 show that some students' met the requirements for more than one high/low involvement category. However, students were assigned to the category in which they *best* fit the requirements. In total, seven students

were categorized as high social media involvement, two students were categorized as low social media involvement, eight students were categorized as high fresh produce involvement, and five students were categorized as low fresh produce involvement.

Focus group assignments are outlined in Table 18.

Table 18
Focus Group Assignments

	Focus group 1 (n = 5)	Focus group 2 (n = 6)	Focus group 3 (n = 4)	Focus group 4 (n = 7)
Gender				
Female	4	4	2	7
Male	1	2	2	0
Enrolled Course				
<i>Food and Agricultural Sales</i>	4	5	3	0
<i>Design for Agricultural Media</i>	1	1	1	7
Involvement Category				
High social media involvement	3	0	0	4
Low social media involvement	2	0	0	0
High fresh produce involvement	0	6	0	3
Low fresh produce involvement	0	0	4	0

Note: Percentage rounded to the nearest whole number; high and low involvement with social media was determined based on the findings presented in “Social Media Update 2014,” by Duggan, et al., 2015, *Pew Research Center*; high and low involvement with fresh produce was determined using “Dietary Guidelines for Americans,” by USDA, 2010, retrieved from www.dietaryguidelines.gov.

Design for Agricultural Media and *Food and Agricultural Sales* were closely represented across focus groups. In total, 10 students were enrolled in *Design for Agricultural Media* and 12 students were enrolled in *Food and Agricultural Sales*. Focus

groups varied in size but remained small in number with no less than four and no more than seven participants.

RO 3: Describe Students' Perceptions of Digital Fresh Produce Advertisements

3.1: How do students perceive paid advertisements used in active fresh produce advertising campaigns? The two paid advertisements used in this study were selected from the Avocados From Mexico and California Avocados campaigns (Figure 2). The first paid advertisement depicted a computer generated football field with a clip art version of an avocado holding a sign that read, "Rockin' Guac amigo!" The advertisement also included a can of Ro-tel tomatoes and a fresh avocado. The second paid advertisement depicted fresh ingredients displayed on a wood cutting board. The ingredients featured included one avocado, one tomato, several slices of turkey meat, a few strips of bacon, two pieces of lettuce, one loaf of bread, and a cup of mayonnaise. The advertisement also included a tagline that read, "Without California Avocados, It's Just a Turkey Sandwich."



Figure 2. Paid advertisements selected from the Avocados From Mexico and California Avocados campaigns.

Students recorded numerous different characteristic key terms in response to both paid advertisements. In total, students ($n = 22$) recorded 35 terms for advertisement A and 61 terms for advertisement D (Table 19). For advertisement A, the *behavior* category was represented most frequently ($f = 11$), followed by *association* ($f = 8$), *perception* ($f = 5$), *persuasion* ($f = 4$), *other* ($f = 4$), *cognition* ($f = 4$), and *affective/emotion* ($f = 0$). The top five terms students recorded to describe advertisement A were avocado(s) ($f = 12$), guacamole ($f = 10$), green ($f = 9$), Mexican ($f = 6$), and football ($f = 5$). For advertisement D, the *cognition* category was represented most frequently ($f = 16$), followed *behavior* ($f = 13$), *association* ($f = 12$), *perception* ($f = 7$), *persuasion* ($f = 7$), *affective/emotion* ($f = 6$), and *other* ($f = 0$). The top five terms students used to describe advertisement D were sandwich ($f = 10$), healthy ($f = 7$), fresh ($f = 5$), avocado(s) ($f = 4$), and warm ($f = 4$).

Table 19
Paid Advertisements Terminology Coding by Facets Categories

Facet	A ($n = 35$)	Characteristic Key Terms	D ($n = 61$)	Characteristic Key Terms
Perception	5	eye-popping, busy colorful, crowded	7	clean, simple, balanced, organized
Cognition	3	cheesy, unclear, professional	16	understandable, pretty, persuasive, effective, appealing, fake
Affective/ Emotion	0	n/a	6	comfort, safety, trust, warm, hungry

Table 19 continued

Facet	A (<i>n</i> = 35)	Characteristic Key Terms	D (<i>n</i> = 61)	Characteristic Key Terms
Association	8	Mexican, Tex-Mex, football, Ro-tel	12	deli, Jason's Deli, California, Mexico, homestyle
Persuasion	4	healthy, fresh, pre-packaged, spicy	7	fresh, healthy, delicious, crisp, meaty
Behavior	11	guacamole, chips, avocado(s), fajitas, salsa, queso	13	sandwich, salad, cook, restaurant
Other	4	why, always, season	0	n/a

Note: Other = terms that were ambiguous to the six facets categories; all terminology was coded according to Wells et al.'s (2006) facets model of effective advertising in *Advertising Principles and Practice* (p. 104), Prentice Hall.

Advertisement A: Reaction and action. A majority of students said they never saw advertisement A before taking part in the focus groups. However, one student recalled hearing the Avocadoes From Mexico theme song because his/her “dad sings it” (01.A.01). Another student recalled seeing the Ro-tel product in stores but not advertisement A (02.C.03). The amount of detail (03.D.01) and colorful (01.A.04; 01.A.05; 02.C.06) appearance of advertisement A attracted students’ attention. Elements such as the “giant” (02.C.04) avocado/can, “Ro-tel brand” (02.C.02; 02.C.03), “football field” (04.A.01; 04.C.07), and “clip art” (01.B.02) also caught the attention of different students. The combination of real and clip art pictures was attractive to some students (03.D.04; 04.A.01) but not others (01.B.02; 04.C.02). One student said the clip art

element “looks thrown in there” (01.A.01) and another student said that the clip art did not add anything to the advertisement (04.C.02).

Overall, students’ expressed mixed emotions toward advertisement A. Two students liked the bright and consistent colors (01.B.02; 02.C.01) featured in the advertisement. Other students liked design elements such as the tagline (03.D.04), logo placement (02.C.04), and product placement (03.D.01). Students’ also liked the clarity (03.D.03) and fresh appearance (02.C.03) of the avocado. However, many students disliked advertisement A because the advertisement was “confusing and unclear” (03.D.03) and hard to understand (02.C.02). One student said the advertisement was “disjointed” (04.C.07) and another said it was “too busy” (04.D.05). Thus, some students deemed the advertisement confusing (02.C.06), unprofessional (01.B.02) and “painful to look at” (02.C.04). One student disagreed and said they were “satisfied” (04.A.06) with the advertisement. Additionally, advertisement A “served its purpose” (04.A.06) because a majority of students felt “hungry” (01.A.04; 02.C.03; 03.D.02) after viewing the advertisement.

Because of the attractive presentation of the avocado (01.A.05), advertisement A motivated students’ to eat fresh produce. Students agreed the avocado was “appealing” (01.A.05; 02.C.06) and presentable (03.D.04). Students agreed, in comparison to the avocado, the Ro-tel can was not appealing (02.C.04) and did not cause them to “think fresh” (04.C.07). Advertisement A caused several students to think of guacamole (03.D.02; 04.C.02) and chips (04.C.07; 04.C.02), however, advertisement A also motivated some students (02.C.05; 02.C.03) to purchase ingredients to make guacamole

but not others (01.A.01). One student purchases avocados regularly; therefore, the advertisement did not further motivate them to purchase avocados in the future (01.A.01). However, another student said that advertisement A made them “want to buy avocados” (01.A.05). Another student said the advertisement motivated them to purchase ingredients to “make a salad” (02.C.03).

Several students connected with advertisement A and, upon viewing the advertisement, many students wanted to call up their friends and have a party (03.D.02; 03.D.04; 04.A.03). Advertisement A also related to students because of the football field background and the advertisement was aimed at tailgating (01.A.05; 03.D.03). Aside from parties, football, and tailgating, one student was reminded of his/her internship with HEB (02.C.05) and another student was reminded of his/her home in San Antonio, Texas (02.C.04). Advertisement A also reminded students of different types of “hosting” (04.C.02). One student was reminded of hosting parties and “get togethers” (02.A.06) while another student was reminded of a time when their roommates hosted “exchange students from Mexico” (03.D.02).

The main takeaway from advertisement A was avocados are “always in season” (01.A.04; 04.A.03). One student also learned, through recognition of the brand, avocados could be grown in Mexico (03.D.03). One student said, “I would remember the Avocados From Mexico brand because I don’t typically think of a specific country when buying avocados in the store” (03.D.03). Students also learned “there are multiple ways to make guacamole” (02.C.04; 02.C.05).

Advertisement D: Reaction and action. Although advertisement D “seem[ed] familiar” (01.A.05; 01.A.04) to students, many could not recall where they saw the advertisement (02.C.01; 03.D.02; 03.D.06). However, one student distinctly remembered seeing the advertisement on Pinterest (04.D.05). Students were attracted to the colorful (02.C.04; 02.C.05), detailed (02.C.04; 04.C.07), and inviting (04.A.03) appearance of advertisement D. The advertisement was “homey” (01.A.01; 03.D.04) in nature and included a variety of items (02.C.06; 03.D.01). The “homey feeling” (03.D.03) made students “hungry” (04.A.03; 04.A.01) and longing for a sandwich (01.A.05; 04.A.04).

A majority of students liked advertisement D. They liked the overall design (01.A.04; 04.A.06) and the food presentation (03.D.01; 04.A.01). In particular, students liked the “rustic font” (01.A.05), “tagline” (04.C.07), and “layout and spacing” (03.D.02) of ingredients and ad copy. The ingredients looked fresh (03.D.01; 04.A.01) and complemented the colors (03.D.03; 04.A.06) of the advertisement copy and logo. One student liked the intentionality of the logo placement on the tomato (03.D.02). While another student appreciated the strategic placement of the avocado (01.A.04; 03.D.01). Few students disliked advertisement D. One student disliked the placement of the logo (03.D.01) and another said the size of “California Avocados” distracted from the advertisement copy (03.D.02).

Because the produce featured in advertisement D was “appealing” (01.B.02), looked “fresh” (04.A.04), and seemed “tasty” (03.D.01), students wanted to “make a sandwich” (01.B.03; 03.D.02). Advertisement D illustrated the versatility of avocados (03.D.04) and made students aware of the different ways to incorporate avocados into

their diet (01.A.01; 03.D.03). Advertisement D prompted one student to think about incorporating “healthy options” (01.A.01) into his/her diet. Seeing advertisement D, one student would consider pairing complementarity items, such as avocados and tomatoes, on a sandwich (03.D.03) because “avocados class up your sandwich” (01.B.02).

A majority of students said advertisement D motivated them to purchase ingredients to make a sandwich (01.A.04; 03.D.04). Other students were more specific and said the advertisement prompted them to want to purchase avocados (03.D.01; 04.A.06) and other “wholesome ingredients” (04.C.07) because the products featured in the advertisement looked healthy (02.C.03). Additionally, several students connected advertisement D to an aspect of their lives, such as “lunchtime” (01.A.01; 03.D.02), family gatherings (03.D.03; 04.C.07), and “balanced eating” (01.B.02). Other students were reminded of specific places, such as Jason’s Deli (02.C.03), Whole Foods (03.D.04), and Panera (03.D.01).

3.2: How do students perceive unpaid advertisements used in active fresh produce advertising campaigns? The two unpaid advertisements used in this study were selected from the California Avocados and FNV campaigns (Figure 3). The first unpaid advertisement showcased a fresh, cut avocado displayed on a grey background. The advertisement also included the California Avocados logo and a tagline that read “California Avocados are Naturally Sodium and Cholesterol Free.” The second unpaid advertisement showcased a badly bruised banana displayed on a muted yellow background. The advertisement also included the FNV logo and the hashtag “#sellmeFNV.”



Figure 3. Unpaid advertisements selected from the California Avocado and FNV campaigns.

Students recorded contrasting characteristic key terms for the unpaid advertisements. In total, students ($n = 22$) recorded 35 terms for advertisement B and 44 terms for advertisement E (Table 20). For advertisement B, the *cognition* category was represented most frequently ($f = 14$), followed by *persuasion* ($f = 8$), *perception* ($f = 4$), *behavior* ($f = 4$), *affective/emotion* ($f = 3$), and *other* ($f = 2$). The top five terms used to describe advertisement B were clean ($f = 11$), healthy ($f = 10$), fresh ($f = 10$), avocado(s) ($f = 8$), and simple ($f = 7$). For advertisement E, the *persuasion* category was represented most frequently ($f = 12$), followed by *perception* ($f = 10$), *cognition* ($f = 6$), *affective/emotion* ($f = 6$), *association* ($f = 4$), *behavior* ($f = 3$), and *other* ($f = 2$). The top five terms used to describe advertisement E were old ($f = 12$), brown ($f = 7$), banana ($f = 6$), yellow ($f = 6$), and bruised ($f = 6$).

Table 20
Unpaid Advertisements Terminology Coding by Facets Categories

Facet	B (n = 34)	Characteristic Key Terms	E (n = 44)	Characteristic Key Terms
Perception	4	green, plain, white, symmetrical	10	brown, simple, yellow, dark, abrupt
Cognition	14	classy, modern, expensive, focused, professional	6	unclear, confusing, ugly, modern
Affective/ Emotion	3	yum, positive, good	6	nasty, eww, gross, bad
Association	5	Mexico, California, desert, beaches	4	trash, recycle, resourceful
Persuasion	8	ripe, fresh, organic, crisp, tasty	12	old, soft, overripe, spoiled, squishy, ripe, sweet
Behavior	4	avocado(s), guacamole, vegetable	3	bread, banana, produce
Other	2	sodium, seed	2	done, why

Note: Other = terms that were ambiguous to the six facets categories; all terminology was coded according to Wells et al.'s (2006) facets model of effective advertising in *Advertising Principles and Practice* (p. 104), Prentice Hall.

Advertisement B: Reaction and action. Only one student recalled seeing advertisement B prior to attending the focus groups and recalled scrolling by a similar version of the advertisement on Instagram (02.C.01). Upon seeing the advertisement for the first time, one student said it looked like an advertisement in Central Market (02.C.04) and another said it looked like an advertisement in Whole Foods (01.A.05).

The clean and clear (01.B.02; 02.C.04; 03.D.01) design of advertisement B and advertisement copy (02.C.03; 02.C.05) explaining the health benefits of avocados attracted students. In general, students said the advertisement appeared “more realistic” (04.A.03; 04.A.06) than previous advertisements and agreed the advertisement layout was nice and pretty (04.A.03; 04.D.05). Nearly all students across focus groups liked the simplicity of advertisement B (01.B.03; 02.C.04; 03.D.03; 04.D.05) because the copy was easy to read (01.B.02) and placed strategically above the avocado, drawing viewers attention to the main focal point of the advertisement (02.C.03).

Other students liked the logo placement (03.D.01) and use of white space to clarify the message (03.D.03). White space contributed to the clean (02.C.05) and “clutter free” (03.D.03) design of advertisement B. For one student the use of white space was unappealing (03.D.02) and another the drop shadow on the avocado was distracting (01.A.01). The tagline was also attractive to some but not others. One student said that presenting the health benefits of avocados in the tagline “without the nutrition label” (03.D.04) was classy. While another noted it was unnecessary (02.C.04). In turn, advertisement B prompted one student to think of “clean, nutritious food” (01.B.02), enforced avocados are healthy (03.D.03), and inspired another student to eat healthy (04.D.05).

Advertisement B was connected to clean eating (03.D.01; 03.D.04), motivating students to eat fresh because of the appealing presentation of the avocado (02.C.04; 01.A.04). One student said, “if they [avocados] always looked like that, I would eat them all the time” (01.A.04). One student was most impressed with avocados’ health benefits

(04.C.02), which motivated students to want to purchase avocados in the future (03.D.01; 04.C.07) and “experiment with avocados” (02.C.03) when cooking and preparing meals. After learning that avocados are grown in California, not just Mexico (02.C.03; 04.D.05), several students said they would be more willing to purchase avocados from California than Mexico to support U.S. farmers (01.A.01; 03.D.03; 04.C.02).

Advertisement B shed light on one student’s attitude about where food comes from (04.C.02). The advertisement reminded one student of Central Market where they purchase produce (02.C.04). No matter where they purchase produce, a majority of students connected advertisement B to dieting and eating healthy (01.A.04; 03.D.01; 03.D.03). Thus, the main takeaways students gained from advertisement B were health related: avocados are sodium and cholesterol free (01.A.05; 03.D.03; 01.A.06).

Advertisement E: Reaction and action. None of the students ($n = 22$) recalled seeing advertisement E before participating in the focus groups. However, the nasty, old banana attracted their attention (01.B.02; 02.C.03; 04.C.07) to the advertisement. The hashtag #stilldelicious caused students to stop and think about the advertisement’s message (03.D.01; 03.D.04). Some students did not agree with the hashtag (03.D.01; 03.D.04), but the hashtag caused other students to think of different uses for overripe bananas, such as banana bread (01.A.01; 02.C.02). One student said the advertisement reminded his/her of the saying, “don’t judge a book by its cover” (02.C.06). The overall appearance of the banana caused students to stop and notice advertisement E (04.C.07).

Once students stopped to look at the advertisement, they noticed the appealing linear design and layout (01.A.05; 02.C.04). Other students liked the advertisement was “product oriented” (03.D.01) and consisted of complimentary colors (02.C.03; 03.D.03). However, not all students liked advertisement E’s color pallet. One student noted the advertisement creator should have chosen a different color for the background so the banana would “stand out” (04.C.07) against the muted yellow background. The color of the tagline and logo resulted in “too much brown” (02.C.01), which was unappealing. Some students’ did not like the advertisement because the banana looked gross, not fresh (01.A.05; 02.C.03). The message was misinterpreted (01.A.01; 04.A.06) because many students did not notice the hashtag (02.C.02; 04.C.07; 04.A.03). The confusing message (03.D.03) and lack of knowledge about the FNV brand (01.B.03; 02.C.04) caused students to feel confused (03.D.03; 04.A.06). Another student was left feeling “bummed out” and “wasteful” (03.D.02). To increase appeal, one student suggested using a “less bruised” (01.A.01) banana to get the message across and another agreed the featured banana was “too far gone” (01.B.02).

Although the banana featured in advertisement E did not appear to be fresh (02.C.03), the advertisement prompted students to want to eat fresh bananas before they overripen (02.C.05; 03.D.04). The advertisement motivated one student to not waste bananas in the future and to make them into something useful like banana bread (04.A.04). Another student was reminded to “be conservative” (01.B.02) and not purchase more produce without eating what he/she has. After viewing the old, overripe

banana featured in advertisement E, students wanted to buy fresh bananas (01.A.01; 02.C.06; 03.D.02) or continue to “pick green bananas” (04.C.02) at the grocery store.

Many students experienced a personal connection with advertisement E. In particular, one student said he/she uses overripe bananas for baking and smoothies (01.B.02). Advertisement E reminded another student of her dad because he does not like to waste food and “always eats old fruit” (01.A.05). Due to a busy schedule, one student has a hard time eating fresh produce before it goes bad (02.C.04). Although the advertisement featured an unappealing, overripe banana, one student said advertisement E did not change how he/she “feel[s]” (04.D.05) about bananas. However, many students learned that bananas are “still useful” (03.D.02) even when the peel looks brown and feels soft (01.A.05; 02.C.06), but one student “wouldn’t test it out” (02.C.06).

3.3: How do students perceive endorsed advertisements used in active fresh produce advertising campaigns? The two endorsed advertisements used in this study were selected from the FNV campaign (Figure 4). The first endorsed advertisement featured NFL football player Cam Newton on a plain light blue background. In the advertisement, Newton was holding a bushel of fresh carrots to his ear and was pointing to the FNV logo. The second endorsed advertisement featured MLB baseball player Hunter Pence on a plain mustard yellow background. In the advertisement, Pence was holding a baseball and a variety of vegetables including a bell pepper, orange, and tomato. Both Newton and Pence were dressed professionally in complementary colors to the produce being advertised.



Figure 4. Endorsed advertisements selected from the FNV campaign.

Students recorded similar characteristic key terms for the endorsed advertisements. In total, students ($n = 22$) recorded 54 terms for advertisement C and 53 terms for advertisement F (Table 21). For advertisement C, the *cognition* category was represented most frequently ($f = 25$), followed by *other* ($f = 11$), *perception* ($f = 4$), *affective/emotion* ($f = 4$), *association* ($f = 4$), *behavior* ($f = 4$), and *persuasion* ($f = 2$). The top five terms recorded for advertisement C were carrot(s) ($f = 12$), orange ($f = 10$), fun[ny] ($f = 7$), phone ($f = 6$), and healthy ($f = 6$). For advertisement F, the *cognition* category was also represented most frequently ($f = 11$), followed by *perception* ($f = 10$), *other* ($f = 10$), *association* ($f = 9$), *behavior* ($f = 7$), *affective/emotion* ($f = 4$), and *persuasion* ($f = 2$). The top five terms recorded for advertisement F were baseball ($f = 16$), vegetables ($f = 6$), orange ($f = 5$), colorful ($f = 4$), and sports ($f = 4$).

Table 21
Endorsed Advertisements Terminology Coding by Facets Categories

Facet	C (n = 54)	Characteristic Key Terms	F (n = 53)	Characteristic Key Terms
Perception	4	matching, simple, clean, color	10	colorful, bright, red
Cognition	25	blah, fancy, unclear, interesting, boring, weird, trendy	11	interesting, unclear, creative, memorable, different
Affective/ Emotion	4	happy, eww, funny	4	funny, warm, confused
Association	4	Cam Newton, football, talking, hearing	9	baseball, sports, juggling, game
Persuasion	2	healthy, organic	2	healthy, fresh
Behavior	4	produce, carrot, orange, vegetable(s)	7	fruit, vegetable(s), tomato, cook, produce, orange
Other	11	suit, over, pointing, why, sweater, unidentified, character	10	small, tall, handful, just, no, statement, man

Note: Other = terms that were ambiguous to the six facets categories; all terminology was coded according to Wells et al.'s (2006) facets model of effective advertising in *Advertising Principles and Practice* (p. 104), Prentice Hall.

Advertisement C: Reaction and action. None of the students (n = 22) recalled seeing advertisement C before participating in the focus groups. After viewing the advertisement, students thought the celebrity was acting like he was on the phone

(02.C.05; 04.A.01). They noticed he was pointing to the logo (01.B.02; 01.A.05) in the upper right-hand corner of the advertisement. Although students were unaware of the meaning behind the FNV logo (04.D.05; 04.A.06), the advertisement was effective in drawing one student's attention to the brand (01.A.05). By the time this advertisement was displayed, students began to be curious about the meaning behind FNV (03.D.03; 04.A.06). Advertisement C grabbed students' attention (04.C.06), but the portrayed message was confusing and unclear (01.A.05). One student said, "I don't know what they're advertising" (01.B.02). Thus, the advertisement was lacking a "call-to-action" (04.C.02) and needed more information to be successful (03.D.02).

Not all students found advertisement C unappealing. In fact, one student said the advertisement caused him/her to "stop and look" (04.C.07). Other students said the celebrity's "goofy" (02.C.05) and "playful" (03.D.01) appearance added "funny appeal" (04.A.03) to the product being advertised. Even so, advertisement C raised several questions from students: "What's the logo?" (02.C.03), "What is FNV?" (03.D.03), and "What are they [FNV] advertising?" (03.D.02). Ultimately, advertisement C's lack of information (03.D.02) left students feeling confused (01.B.02; 04.A.01; 04.C.02).

Many students agreed advertisement C did not motivate them to eat fresh produce (02.C.04; 03.D.03; 04.C.02; 04.A.03). One student (01.A.04) said the advertisement did not motivate him/her to eat fresh because his/her attention was mostly focused on the celebrity rather than the carrots. Advertisement C would have been more appealing without the presence of the celebrity (01.A.01). Moreover, advertisement C

did not sell anything (01.B.02) and did not further motivate one student to eat carrots in the future (02.C.04).

Advertisement C did motivate students to purchase carrots for different reasons. One student said he/she typically buys “baby carrots,” but advertisement C motivated him/her to try the big, “long-stem” ones (03.D.03). Also, one student did connect with the celebrity aspect of advertisement C and said that he/she would be motivated to buy carrots because “Cam Newton plays football and he eats them” (02.C.02). Cam Newton’s expression and presence showed “happiness and healthiness go together” (02.C.03). Other students were impressed with Cam Newton’s professional appearance, outfit, and color coordination (01.B.02; 04.A.06). Although students connected with Advertisement C, they did not learn anything new from the advertisement because it left students feeling confused about the message and curious about the FNV logo (03.D.03; 03.D.04).

Advertisement F: Reaction and action. None of the students ($n = 22$) recalled seeing advertisement F before participating in the focus groups. The “baseball” (01.B.02; 02.C.04; 03.D.02), rather than the produce (04.D.05) and the confused look on the celebrity’s face (02.C.06; 03.D.02; 04.C.07) attracted students’ attention to advertisement F. Once advertisement F had their attention, students noticed that the celebrity looked like he was going to juggle (02.C.06; 03.D.02). Not many students liked advertisement F, but some liked the variety of produce advertised (02.C.03; 04.A.03). Because advertisement F showed the “balance between fruits and vegetables” (04.A.03), it promoted a balanced diet.

One student noted the bell pepper looked “out of place” (01.A.01) because the other produce was perfectly round and it “look[ed] fake” (03.D.04). Another student (03.D.02) also disliked the presentation of the baseball and said that it also looked fake. Thus, students were not impressed with the Photoshopped elements of advertisement F. Students also disliked that, upon first glance, their eyes went to the celebrity and not the produce (01.A.01; 01.A.05). This could be because the celebrity appeared “messy” (02.C.04) and not put together (01.A.05; 03.D.01). The produce does not “pop” (04.C.02) and “gets lost” (04.D.05) amongst everything else going on in the advertisement. After viewing advertisement F, students were “confused” (01.A.01; 04.A.01), “uncomfortable” (03.D.04), and “unsure” (02.C.04) about the advertisement and the overall message it was trying to convey. Overall, students were curious about the logo and thought understanding the logo and brand would provide insight to understanding the advertisement (01.B.02).

Because advertisement F lacked a call-to-action (04.C.07), it did not motivate students to eat (01.A.01; 04.C.02) or purchase (01.A.01; 01.A.05; 04.A.01; 04.A.07) fresh produce. Instead, one student wanted to “have a food fight” (03.D.04) and another student remained “indifferent” (04.C.07) toward the advertisement. Few students connected the advertisement to a balanced diet (02.C.03; 02.C.02) and healthy snacks (03.D.01; 03.D.02). However, one student said that, if the advertisement were displayed in a store’s produce section, it would remind him/her to purchase a variety of fruits and vegetables (03.D.02; 03.D.04). One student (01.A.01) disagreed and said that the advertisement was not eye-catching or informational. Perhaps, then, if it were displayed

in store, they would look at it and move on. Another student said, because advertisement F was so disorganized, he/she would not remember the featured produce when shopping (03.D.02).

Students connected advertisement F to sports (02.C.03; 03.D.01; 04.A.01), being active (02.C.05; 04.A.01), and the importance of eating a healthy, balanced diet (02.C.03; 02.C.02). One student related eating healthy to juggling and said, “Like juggling, it’s hard for me to balance my diet” (02.C.02). Another student agreed and said it is especially hard for college students to balance their diet (02.C.03) because of their busy schedules. One student learned (03.D.01) about the grocery store options he/she has. Thus, advertisement F opened one student’s eyes toward the benefits of adding a variety of produce to his/her diet (03.D.04). However, many of the students did not learn anything from advertisement F (01.A.01; 02.C.01; 04.A.01). One student suggested “adding text” (01.B.02) to the advertisement to clarify the message while another suggested featuring more well-known celebrities in the FNV advertisements (02.C.01).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sought to identify college students' perceptions of fresh produce advertisements selected from active fresh produce promotion campaigns. To ensure triangulation and completeness (Bryman, 2012), this study was conducted using a mixed-method approach (Greene & Hall, 2010). Two methods were used for data collection: quantitative questionnaire and qualitative focus groups. The sample for the quantitative portion of this study was conveniently chosen (Baker, 1990) from Texas A&M University students enrolled in *Design for Agricultural Media* and *Food and Agricultural Sales* for the fall 2015 semester. Combined, a total of 175 students were recruited to participate in this study. Of the students recruited, 143 completed an online questionnaire. Of the students who completed the questionnaire, 22 agreed to participate in follow up group discussions about fresh produce advertisements.

RO 1: Describe Students' Perceptions and Consumption of Media

1.1: How do students consume media? Much like their tech-savvy (Hartman & McCambridge, 2011) millennial peers, students ($n = 143$) consume online media, daily. In particular, a majority of students' reported predominately using the Internet and social media to receive news. Students reported engaging with Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat several times per day, confirming not only that Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat are the three most commonly used social media application amongst

millennials (Lipsman, 2014, August 8) but also that millennials spend a majority of their day online (Taylor, 2014, March 10).

In turn, students reported they were less likely to receive daily news from other media channels including TV, and radio. Because no students said the newspaper was their go-to source for daily news, it can be determined that millennials are more likely to use modern digital media channels verses traditional print media channels. Thus, the best way to connect with millennials is online, via social media (SheerID, 2014). However, not all media channels were popular amongst students. In fact, a majority of students reported that they were not active on Pinterest and Twitter. The students who are active on Pinterest prefer to engage with the application one to two days per week, compared to those who predominately engage with Twitter several times per day.

1.2: How do students perceive media? Knowing that millennials are constantly engaging online, one has to wonder how strongly do they believe in the content they are sharing? To answer this question, students were asked to rate the social media platforms they use based on accuracy, credibility, and trustworthiness of content. Students reported that Pinterest, the least used site amongst students, was the most accurate, credible, and trustworthy social media platform. Contrarily, students deemed Snapchat the least accurate, Instagram the least credible, and Facebook the least trustworthy; all are popular social media applications used by millennials (Lipsman, 2014) and students.

Accuracy, credibility, and trustworthiness, were decided based on a 1–5 rating scale with one being “low” and five being “high.” Perhaps the mean scores were higher for Pinterest because of the response rate and vice versa. Even so, students are actively

engaging with social media applications they deem moderately accurate, credible, and trustworthy. So how does your brand stand out amongst a sea of moderate fluff? This is where brand communities and brand loyalty come into play. Because millennials are more likely to purchase products from brand with a social media presence (Millennials Coming of Age, n.d.; Sago, 2010), it is imperative for brand's to establish a positive and strong brand community (Devasagayam et al., 2010) to grab millennial consumers attention.

In relation to information about fresh produce found on different social media platforms, Pinterest was again rated the most accurate, credible, and trustworthy source. Number of responses aside, Pinterest is a great site to use for storing and searching for new recipes. Snapchat was deemed the least credible source for accurate, credible, and trustworthy information about fresh produce. Thus, there are positives and negatives to advertising on Pinterest and Snapchat. The plus for Pinterest is students trust the source and believe the content more than content on Snapchat. The downside is Pinterest has a smaller follower base than Snapchat.

RO 2: Describe Students' Buying Habits and Consumption of Fresh Produce

2.1: Why do students purchase fresh produce? Students reported they purchase fresh produce largely because of taste and health benefits. In fact, students reported they were more likely to purchase fresh fruits because of taste and fresh vegetables because of the health benefits. Accessibility and budget were not necessarily a concern for students when purchasing fresh produce. Thus, confirming that millennials are health conscious and willing to pay for fresh, not processed (Pinsker, 2015, August

14). Because the frequency of responses for taste were so high, it can be determined that a majority of students highly prefer the taste of fruit to vegetables. However, they purchase and consume vegetable because they know vegetables are good for them.

2.2: Why do students consume fresh produce? The results of this study confirmed Bratskeir's (2015, August 18) conclusion that millennials are eating differently than previous generations. When it comes to their decision to eat fresh produce, a majority of students said they eat fresh fruits and vegetables again because of taste and health reasons. Like most millennials, students were interested in fruits and vegetables because they are fresh and healthy (PMA Research and Development, 2014). The majority of students reported that accessibility and budget were the least two factors in their decision making process to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. Meaning, students, and millennials, were willing to go out and find good produce to eat, despite the cost (Pinsker, 2015, August 14).

RO 3: Describe Students' Perceptions of Digital Fresh Produce Advertisements

3.1: How do students perceive paid advertisements used in active fresh produce advertising campaigns? The two paid advertisements used in this study looked very different but were advertising the same product—avocados. Both advertisements used meal preparation as a central focus to attract consumers' attention. Advertisement A suggested that consumers pair an avocado with a can of Ro-tel tomatoes to make guacamole. Advertisement B suggested consumers pair an avocado with lunchmeat, bread, and fixings to make a sandwich.

Advertisement A was sponsored by Avocados From Mexico and used a very “flashy” technique to advertise avocados. The use of bright colors and the combination of real and computer generated images contributed to the overall flashiness of advertisement A. On the other hand, advertisement D was sponsored by California Avocados and used a “home grown” technique to advertise avocados. The rough cutting board and fresh ingredients emulated a familiar setting in which individuals prepare sandwiches in their home. Despite their design differences, the majority of students’ responses to the designs of both advertisements design most closely aligned with Wells et al.’s (2006) behavior category.

Described as consumers’ willingness to express action (Wells et al., 2006), alignment with the behavior category demonstrates an advertisements success in motivating consumers to purchase the advertised product. In close comparison, the terminology students used to describe advertisement A ($f = 11$) aligned with *behavior* less frequently than advertisement D ($f = 13$). Thus, advertisement D was more successful in prompting students to go out and purchase the ingredients being advertised. In turn, both paid advertisements were successful in triggering a reaction from students. After viewing advertisement A, a majority of students expressed willingness to purchase avocados or make guacamole. In turn, after viewing advertisement D, a majority of students expressed willingness to purchase or make a sandwich. Therefore, both paid advertisements were successful in triggering an appropriate reaction from students.

Although both advertisements were successful in generating a reaction, students highly preferred advertisement D to advertisement A. This is evident because students

recorded responses positively aligned with advertisement D, in comparison to advertisement A. Wells et al. (2006) described *cognition* as consumers' response to an advertisement based on prior knowledge and experience. In response to advertisement D, *cognition* ($f = 16$) was represented more frequently than advertisement A ($f = 3$). The majority of students' responses to advertisement D were positive and the majority of students' responses to advertisement A were negative. Thus, students' were more attracted to advertisement D's calm, natural, and inviting approach in comparison to advertisement A's loud, unrealistic, and flashy approach.

Students more emotionally identified with advertisement D than advertisement A. During the terminology portion of this study, students did not express an emotional connection with advertisement A ($f = 0$), but they did express an emotional connection with advertisement D ($f = 6$). However, during the discussion portion, students emotionally connected to certain design elements of advertisement A. For both advertisements, students complimented the placement of the tagline, product, and logo. After the discussion portion, students agreed that advertisement A's message was unclear and the overall appearance of the advertisement was disjointed. Only two students disliked the font size of the tagline on advertisement D. Thus, students were more emotionally connected to advertisement D in comparison to advertisement A.

Students' responses also highly aligned with the association category. In regard to advertisement A, associations ($f = 8$) were made to football, hosting, and parties. This was largely due to students' recognition of the football field background and connection of guacamole to a typical party dish that brings people together. Congruent with the

“home grown” aspect of advertisement D, students associated ($f = 16$) the advertisement with locations where avocados are grown and prepared.

3.2: How do students perceive unpaid advertisements used in active fresh produce advertising campaigns? The two unpaid advertisements used in this study utilized similar, clean design elements to advertise two very different fresh produce products—avocados and bananas. Promoting avocados’ health benefits was the main focus of advertisement B, sponsored by California Avocados. Advertisement E, sponsored by FNV, focused on promoting the usefulness of bananas at a less-than-ripe stage. Much like the paid advertisements, both advertisements were geared toward the same target consumer, yet students expressed very different reactions to each advertisement.

Both advertisements used complementary colors, plain backgrounds, and simple taglines to advertise products. Campaign names and logos were present on both advertisements, and both advertisements were product-oriented. Students were attracted to the simplicity of both designs mainly because both of the products featured were the main focus of the advertisements. However, although similar in design, students’ responses to both advertisements were across the board with no congruent majority aligning with Wells et al.’s (2006) facets categories.

Students’ responses aligned with the *cognition* category for both advertisements B ($f = 14$) and D ($f = 6$). When comparing the two advertisements, students’ used past experiences and prior knowledge (Wells et al., 2006) to appreciate both advertisements modern layout and design. Although both advertisements embodied a modern approach,

students' responded more positively to advertisement B than to advertisement E. Advertisement B was classy, professional, modern, and appealing and advertisement E was creative, unclear, confusing, and ugly. Perhaps the negative responses to advertisement E were because of the overripe banana.

The unappealing banana perhaps prompted a majority of student responses to most frequently align with *persuasion* ($f = 12$). Wells et al. (2006) described *persuasion* as consumers' motivation to try or not try the advertised product. Because students described advertisement E as spoiled, bruised, non-edible, and unappetizing, advertisement E did not motivate students to try bananas.

Students' responses to advertisement B also frequently aligned with *perception* ($f = 8$). Because students described advertisement B as tasty, fresh, ripe, and healthy, the advertisement motivated students to try avocados. Thus, students were more attracted to the appealing and fresh appearance of the avocado in advertisement B and less attracted to the old and overripe appearance of the banana in advertisement E.

Because both advertisements aligned less frequently with *behavior*, advertisements B ($f = 4$) and E ($f = 3$) did not motivate students to buy fresh produce (Wells et al., 2006). Additionally, a majority of students had not seen advertisement's B and E before participating in the focus groups. Thus, students learned the health benefits of avocados from advertisement B and the usefulness of overripe bananas from advertisement E. Going forward, students said they would be more conscious of avocados health benefits when shopping and will not throw old bananas away at the first sign of bruising.

3.3: How do students perceive endorsed advertisements used in active fresh produce advertising campaigns? Both endorsed advertisements were selected from the FNV campaign. Thus, advertisement's C and F were practically identical in design. Each advertisement showcased a celebrity holding fresh produce items against a plain background. No taglines or copy were included on either advertisement. In fact, the only other element featured in both advertisements was the FNV logo. No students recalled seeing the FNV logo or endorsed advertisements prior to participating in the focus groups. Additionally, few students recognized Cam Newton, featured in advertisement C, and no students recognized Hunter Pence, featured in advertisement F.

Because of the endorsed advertisements' similarities, it is no surprise students responded similarly to both advertisements. In particular, a majority of students' responses aligned with *cognition* for both advertisement C ($f = 25$) and advertisement F ($f = 11$). Students positively described both advertisements as interesting, creative, playful, and memorable but negatively described both advertisements as unclear and ineffective. Thus, even though a majority of students responded positively to both endorsed advertisements, the advertisements' message was unclear. Adding copy would clarify the messages of advertisement C and F.

A majority of students recorded responses to advertisements C ($f = 11$) and F ($f = 10$) were ambiguous to Wells et al.'s (2006) facets model of effective advertising. Thus, upon first glance, students did not know how to appropriately respond to and were confused by the endorsed advertisements' message. Perhaps, students did not know how to respond to the advertisements because they did not feel connected to the celebrity

endorsers. In fact, students' responses less frequently aligned with *association* for advertisements C ($f = 4$) and F ($f = 9$). Thus, alignment with *association* potentially would have increased if students were more familiar with the celebrity endorsers.

Advertisement F ($f = 10$) more frequently aligned with *perception* than advertisement C ($f = 4$). Thus, advertisement F was more successful in capturing students' attention than advertisement C. Although advertisement F captured students' attention, it was for negative reasons: the confused look on Pence's face and the overall Photoshopped appearance of the advertisement. Perhaps, the unrealistic appearance of the endorsed advertisements influenced students' lack of motivation to try or purchase fresh produce. *Persuasion* and *behavior* were represented less frequently for advertisement C ($f = 2; f = 2$) and advertisement F ($f = 4; f = 7$). Thus, the endorsed advertisements were unsuccessful in relaying a "call-to-action" to students.

Implications and Recommendations

For industry. Millennials are health conscious (Bratskeir, 2015, August 18) and less likely to spend money on processed foods (Pinsker, 2015). Thus, perhaps, students were more attracted to paid advertisement D because it showcased fresh, natural ingredients in comparison to paid advertisement A that showcased a can of Ro-tel tomatoes. Overall, students associated advertisement D with fresh, healthy ingredients and associated advertisement A with "pre-packaged" foods. Because students were attracted to the calm, natural, and "home grown" selling tactics used in advertisement D, it is recommended that the fresh produce industry focus on advertising fresh produce in its natural state. When advertising to millennials, the fresh produce industry should take

a home grown, realistic approach to maximize an advertisement's effectiveness.

Choosing to go a more realistic, less flashy route is also likely to increase consumers' emotional connection with an advertisement.

Although the unpaid advertisements were not successful in motivating students to purchase fresh produce, they were successful in educating students about the healthiness and usefulness of fresh produce. Particularly, in regard to advertisement B, students liked that a nutrition label was not needed to present the health benefits of avocados. Students' responses to advertisement B further imply millennials are more concerned than previous generations about their overall health and wellness (Bratskeir, 2015, August 18). Thus, the fresh produce industry should focus on advertising health benefits of fresh produce in an attractive, classy, and modern fashion.

Although students were less attracted to advertisement E, the advertisement did prompt students to be more resourceful and less wasteful with overripe produce. However, in discussion, several students suggested that a less-bruised banana would be more appealing and achieve the same message of being resourceful. Students' reaction to the badly bruised banana confirms Pinsker's (2015, August 14) conclusion that millennials are foodies who are most attracted to presentable food. Millennials want food presentable enough to post on social media (Pinsker, 2015, August 14). Thus, the fresh produce industry should focus on creating and sharing advertisements that showcase produce in the best "light."

After seeing the endorsed advertisements, a majority of students sought information about the FNV logo and brand. Although the advertisements were not

successful in motivating students to try or to purchase fresh produce, they were successful in generating interest about the brand. Since the FNV campaign was launched in February 2015 (Fresh Fruit Portal, 2015), and because it is relatively new, students sought more information about the brand. As FNV continues to grow and advance its marketing efforts, students are more likely to run across FNV sponsored advertisements on social media. The endorsed advertisements were successful in generating a conversation about fruits and vegetables.

Furthermore, very few students recognized Newton and Pence. Thus, the fresh produce industry should encourage celebrities, who relate to millennials, to endorse fruits and vegetables. Students did not like the Photoshopped appearance of the endorsed advertisements. Thus, celebrities and produce should be presented in a more realistic, relatable fashion. Perhaps presenting Newton on a football field in his team jersey holding produce would have helped students better relate to advertisement C. However, it may not be necessary for the fresh produce industry to feature celebrities in their advertisements because the more realistic advertisements of just fresh produce stimulated a more positive response from students.

For practice. Perhaps the most intriguing component of this study was the Snapchat approach. Starting out as an innovative idea, the Snapchat approach blossomed into a method used to facilitate rich feedback and engagement amongst study participants. Snapchat has been identified as an effective medium to connect with millennials (Wasserman, 2016) because of the applications ability to present easily digestible content in real-time (Snapchat, n.d.). The Snapchat approach was successful

because students were interested in the delivery method, confirming the conclusion that the best way to connect with millennials is via social media (Taylor, 2014; SheerID, 2014).

By showing participants snippets of information quickly and in real-time, they remained alert, engaged, and interested in the task at hand. The Snapchat approach also helped students transition into the open-ended discussion portion of the focus groups. Many students said they liked referring back to their index cards to reflect on their initial response to the advertisements. From there, students were able to openly discuss different elements of each advertisement.

Because the Snapchat approach was successful in stimulating engagement and facilitating rich discussion amongst study participants, it is suggested that higher education professors consider using the Snapchat approach to deliver educational content. The Snapchat approach could be used at the beginning of class to introduce lecture content and/or at the end of class to summarize lecture content. The Snapchat approach could also be used during test reviews and group projects. It is important to note that the Snapchat application was emulated, not used. Thus, the potential for use in a classroom setting is vast.

For research. Because this study was limited to Texas A&M University students, the results of this study are only applicable to the study population. Thus, to increase applicability, it is recommended this study be replicated to include a larger sample of college students across the nation. To ensure focus group participants are knowledgeable of the subject matter (Morgan, 1997; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990),

college students should be selected from courses that focus on teaching marketing, selling, and design principles.

This study only documented students' point-in-time behavioral change. Several students said that certain advertisements motivated them to try or purchase the product being advertised. However, this study did not follow-up to see if students actually went out and purchased fresh produce after leaving the focus group. Thus, it is recommended that a longitudinal study be conducted to investigate students' behavioral change over time. Successful advertising can contribute to behavioral change and, in this case, potentially change millennials buyer behavior to include fresh produce in their diet.

This study also investigated students' perceptions of fresh produce advertisements. To investigate if students' perceptions are reality, it is recommended that a study be conducted using biometrics. Biometrics can be used to track eye movements and heart rate. Biometric data would be extremely useful to determine points on the advertisement in which the students held their focus. A follow-up discussion could be used to discuss whether the focal points were appealing and vice versa.

The overall goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of millennial college students' perceptions of fresh produce advertisements. An extensive review of literature did not reveal any studies describing consumers' responses to and perceptions of fresh produce advertisements. Thus, it is important to note that, while not largely applicable, the results of this study can provide a starting point for best practices to use when marketing and promoting fresh produce to millennial college students.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

DIVISION OF RESEARCH



DATE: October 05, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Tracy Rutherford
ALRSRCH - Agrilife Research - Ag Leadership, Education & Communication

FROM: Dr. James Fluckey
Chair, TAMU IRB

SUBJECT: Expedited Approval

Study Number: IRB2015-0621D

Title: College Students' Response to Fresh Produce Advertisements

Date of

Determination:

Approval Date: 10/05/2015

**Continuing
Review Due:** 09/01/2016

**Expiration
Date:** 10/01/2016

**Documents
Reviewed and
Approved:**

Only IRB-stamped approved versions of study materials (e.g., consent forms, recruitment materials, and questionnaires) can be distributed to human participants. Please log into iRIS to download the stamped, approved version of all study materials. If you are unable to locate the stamped version in iRIS, please contact the iRIS Support Team at 979.845.4969 or the IRB liaison assigned to your area.

Submission Components			
Title	Version Number	Version Date	Outcome
College Students' Perceptions of Fresh Produce Advertisements	Version 1.0	09/25/2015	Approved
Class Recruitment Script	Version 1.0	09/25/2015	Approved
Focus Group Instrument	Version 1.0	09/24/2015	Approved
Questionnaire Instrument	Version 1.0	09/24/2015	Approved
Questionnaire Consent Form	Version 1.1	09/25/2015	Approved
Focus Group Consent Form	Version 1.1	09/25/2015	Approved

750 Agronomy Road, Suite 2701
1186 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-1186
Tel. 979.458.1467 Fax. 979.862.3176
<http://rcb.tamu.edu>

Document of Consent: Written consent in accordance with 45 CF 46.116/ 21 CFR 50.27
Waiver of Consent:

- Comments:**
- This protocol has been approved for 200 participants.
 - Research is to be conducted according to the study application approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
 - Any future correspondence should include the IRB study number and the study title.
-

Investigators assume the following responsibilities:

1. **Continuing Review:** The study must be renewed by the expiration date in order to continue with the research. A Continuing Review application along with required documents must be submitted by the continuing review deadline. Failure to do so may result in processing delays, study expiration, and/or loss of funding.
2. **Completion Report:** Upon completion of the research study (including data collection and analysis), a Completion Report must be submitted to the IRB.
3. **Unanticipated Problems and Adverse Events:** Unanticipated problems and adverse events must be reported to the IRB immediately.
4. **Reports of Potential Non-compliance:** Potential non-compliance, including deviations from protocol and violations, must be reported to the IRB office immediately.
5. **Amendments:** Changes to the protocol and/or study documents must be requested by submitting an Amendment to the IRB for review. The Amendment must be approved by the IRB before being implemented.
6. **Consent Forms:** When using a consent form or information sheet, the IRB stamped approved version must be used. Please log into IRIS to download the stamped approved version of the consenting instruments. If you are unable to locate the stamped version in IRIS, please contact the IRIS Support Team at 979.845.4969 or the IRB liaison assigned to your area. Human participants are to receive a copy of the consent document, if appropriate.
7. **Post Approval Monitoring:** Expedited and full board studies may be subject to post approval monitoring. During the life of the study, please review and document study progress using the PI self-assessment found on the RCB website as a method of preparation for the potential review. Investigators are responsible for maintaining complete and accurate study records and making them available for post approval monitoring. Investigators are encouraged to request a pre-initiation site visit with the Post Approval Monitor. These visits are designed to help ensure that all necessary documents are approved and in order prior to initiating the study and to help investigators maintain compliance.
8. **Recruitment:** All approved recruitment materials will be stamped electronically by the HRPP staff and available for download from IRIS. These IRB-stamped approved documents from IRIS must be used for recruitment. For materials that are distributed to potential participants electronically and for which you can only feasibly use the approved text rather than the stamped document, the study's IRB Study Number, approval date, and expiration dates must be included in the following format: TAMU IRB#20XX-XXXX Approved: XX/XX/XXXX Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX.
9. **FERPA and PPRA:** Investigators conducting research with students must have appropriate approvals from the FERPA administrator at the institution where the research will be conducted in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) protects the rights of parents in students ensuring that written parental consent is required for participation in surveys, analysis, or evaluation that ask questions falling into categories of protected information.
10. **Food:** Any use of food in the conduct of human research must follow Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure 24.01.01.M4.02.
11. **Payments:** Any use of payments to human research participants must follow Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure 21.01.99.M0.03.
12. **Records Retention:** Federal Regulations require records be retained for at least 3 years. Records of a study that collects protected health information are required to be retained for at least 6 years. Some

APPENDIX B

DESIGN FOR AGRICULTURAL MEDIA CLASS RESEARCH AGREEMENT



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND LIFE SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP,
EDUCATION, AND COMMUNICATIONS

2116 TAMU, COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS 77843-2116
979-845-2951; FAX: 979-845-6296
HTTP://ALEC.TAMU.EDU

September 24, 2015

Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board
c/o Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety
750 Agronomy Road, Suite 2701
TAMU 1186
College Station, Texas 77843-1186

I formally authorize Brooke Prather, a graduate student at Texas A&M University, to conduct research during my class, AGCJ 307: Design for Agricultural Media, for her study, "College Students' Perceptions of Fresh Produce Advertisements."

Prather may attend my class during the Fall 2015 semester to recruit students and conduct research during class time. Prather and I will discuss the best possible date for her visit and, prior to the scheduled recruitment date, I will share my students' contact information (email addresses) with her. Prather has assured me that the email addresses obtained, and the identity of my students, will remain confidential.

During class, Prather will give a short recruitment presentation and will conduct a survey using students who agree to participate in the study. She will send the survey out via Qualtrics to the emails I provide her.

Prather has agreed to provide me with a copy of the Texas A&M IRB-approved, stamped consent document before recruitment.

If there are any questions, please contact me.

Signed,

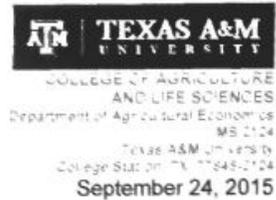
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracy Rutherford".

Tracy Rutherford, Ph.D.

Professor and Associate Department Head for Undergraduate Programs

APPENDIX C

FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SALES CLASS RESEARCH AGREEMENT



Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board
c/o Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety
750 Agronomy Road, Suite 2701
TAMU 1186
College Station, Texas 77843-1186

I formally authorize Brooke Prather, a graduate student at Texas A&M University, to conduct research during my class, AGEC 315: Food and Agricultural Sales, for her study, "College Students' Perceptions of Fresh Produce Advertisements."

Ms. Prather may attend my class during the Fall 2015 semester to recruit students and conduct research during class time. Prather and I will discuss the best possible date for her visit and, prior to the scheduled recruitment date, I will share my students' contact information (email addresses) with her. Prather has assured me that the email addresses obtained will remain confidential and the identity of my students will remain confidential.

During class, Prather will give a short recruitment presentation and will conduct a survey using students who agree to participate in the study. Prather will send the survey out via Qualtrics to the emails I provide her.

Prather has agreed to provide me with a copy of the Texas A&M IRB-approved, stamped consent document before recruitment.

If there are any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kerry Litzenberg".

Kerry Litzenberg
Presidential Professor for Teaching Excellence and
Regents Professor

APPENDIX D

CLASS RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Howdy!

My name is Brooke Prather and I am a graduate student in the ALEC department working towards a master's degree in agricultural communications and journalism.

I would like to invite you to participate in my research study titled, "College Students' Perceptions of Fresh Produce Advertisements." You are being recruited to participate in this study because you are a student in AGCJ 307 and/or AGEC 315.

The purpose of my study is to identify college students' perceptions of paid, unpaid, and endorsed fresh produce advertisements.

The study consists of two parts (a) an online questionnaire administered through Qualtrics and (b) a follow-up discussion via focus group. The Qualtrics questionnaire is designed to collect demographic information, media consumption, and students' fresh produce eating/buying habits. Whereas, the focus groups are designed to gather students' in-depth responses to different types of fresh produce advertisements.

Participation in this study is voluntary and choosing not to partake in the study will not negatively impact your grade.

By now, you should have received an email to your TAMU account. Please take a moment to see if you received the email. [*Thank you.*]

If you would like to participate in the study, please click the link in the email. Please note, this is an anonymous link. Therefore, your personal email will not be connected to the research. However, if you agree to participate in a follow-up discussion—by selecting "yes" on the final question on the questionnaire—I do ask that you provide your UIN so that I may contact you to notify you of the time, date, and location of the focus group. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

Does anyone have any questions? [*Answer questions as needed*]

Great. Dr. Litzenberg/Dr. Rutherford has agreed to allow interested students XX minutes to complete the survey. At this time, please click the Qualtrics link in the email sent to you. Once you click the link, you will have the opportunity to accept or decline participation study.

If you have any further questions, I will answer them now.

Thanks and Gig Em'.



APPENDIX E

EMAIL RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Howdy,

You have been invited to participate in the study, "College Students' Perceptions of Fresh Produce Advertisements" by Brooke Prather, a graduate student in the ALEC department. The goal of this research study is to identify millennial college students' perceptions of advertisements selected from active fresh produce promotion campaigns.

This study consists of two parts (a) an online questionnaire administered through Qualtrics and (b) a follow-up discussion via focus group.

Upon opening the link above, you will have the chance to accept or decline participation in this study. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you.

Follow this link to the Survey:

[\\${1://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

[\\${1://SurveyURL}](#)

NOTE: You MUST take this survey on a desktop/laptop computer. This survey is not mobile friendly.

If you have any questions, please email bprath2@tamu.edu.

Thank you.

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:

[\\${1://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}](#)

APPENDIX F

QUESTIONNAIRE CONSENT FORM

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION PROGRAM
CONSENT FORM

Project Title: COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FRESH PRODUCE
ADVERTISING

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Brooke Prather, a researcher from Texas A&M University. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

The purpose of this study is to identify college students' perceptions of paid, unpaid, and endorsed advertisements from two active fresh produce promotion campaigns.

WHY AM I BEING ASKED TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are enrolled in either AGCJ 307: Design for Agricultural Media or AGECE 315: Food and Agricultural Sales.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE ASKED TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

Two hundred participants will be invited to participate in this study locally. Overall, a total of 160 people will be enrolled.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO BEING IN THIS STUDY?

The alternative is not to participate.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IN THIS STUDY?

You will be asked to complete an online questionnaire administered through Qualtrics. Your participation in this study will last up to 15 minutes.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO ME?

The things that you will be doing have no more risk than you would come across in everyday life. Although the researchers have tried to avoid risks, you may feel that some questions/procedures that are asked of you will be stressful or upsetting. You do not have to answer anything you do not want to.

WILL THERE BE ANY COSTS TO ME?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

WILL I BE PAID TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

WILL INFORMATION FROM THIS STUDY BE KEPT PRIVATE?

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Brooke Prather, Dr. Tracy Rutherford and Dr. Holli Leggette will have access to the records.



**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION PROGRAM
CONSENT FORM**

Information about you will be stored in computer files protected with a password.

People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Information about you and related to this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law.

WHO MAY I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

You may contact the Principal Investigator, Brooke Prather, B.S., to tell him/her about a concern or complaint about this research at 979-458-2304 or bprath2@tamu.edu. You may also contact the Protocol Director, Dr. Tracy Rutherford at 979-458-2744 or rutherford@tamu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, to provide input regarding research, or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office by phone at 1-979-458-4067, toll free at 1-855-795-8636, or by email at irb@tamu.edu.

WHAT IF I CHANGE MY MIND ABOUT PARTICIPATING?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide not to participate or stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no effect on your student status at Texas A&M University. Any new information discovered about the research will be provided to you. This information could affect your willingness to continue your participation.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available and that the researcher will tell me if I must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want. A copy of this entire consent form will be given to me.

Participant's Signature

Date

Printed Name

Date



**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION PROGRAM
CONSENT FORM**

INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT:

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

Signature of Presenter

Date

Printed Name

Date

APPENDIX G
QUESTIONNAIRE

Fresh Produce Survey (Qualtrics export)

Q1 Gender

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q2 Age

- 18-19 (1)
- 20-21 (2)
- 22-24 (3)
- 25-29 (4)
- 30-34 (5)
- 35-44 (6)
- 45-54 (7)
- 55+ (8)

Q3 Ethnicity (Check all that apply)

- White (1)
- Black (2)
- Hispanic (3)
- Asian (4)
- Native Hawaiian (5)
- American Indian (6)
- International (7)
- Other (8) _____

-----Page Break-----

Q4 Marital Status

- Single (1)
- Married (2)
- Widowed (3)
- Divorced (4)

Q5 Household Type

- Living alone (1)
- Living with roommates (2)
- Living with relatives (3)
- Living with significant other (4)

Q6 Who makes food purchasing decisions for your household?

I do (1)

If Household Type Living with roommates Is Selected

My roommates do (2)

If Household Type Living alone Is Selected Or Household Type Living with relatives Is Selected

My relatives do (3)

If Household Type Living alone Is Selected Or Household Type Living with significant other Is Selected

My significant other does (4)

If Household Type Living with roommates Is Selected Or Household Type Living with relatives Is Selected Or Household Type Living with significant other Is Selected

Each person in the household makes their own food purchasing decisions (5)

-----Page Break-----

Q7 Major

- Agricultural Business (1)
- Agricultural Communications and Journalism (2)
- Agricultural Economics (3)
- Agricultural Leadership and Development (4)
- Agricultural Science (5)
- Agricultural Systems Management (6)
- Animal Science (7)
- University Studies (8)
- Other (9) _____

Q8 Classification

- Underclassmen (U1, U2) (1)
- Junior (U3) (2)
- Senior (U4, U5) (3)
- Graduate (G6, G7, G8) (4)

Q9 What is your primary source for daily news content/information?

- Internet (1)
- TV (2)
- Newspaper (3)
- Radio (4)
- Social Media (5)

Q10 What is your primary source for content/information about fresh produce?

- Internet (1)
- TV (2)
- Newspaper (3)
- Radio (4)
- Social Media (5)

-----Page Break-----

Q11 Do you use social media?

- Yes (1)
- No (0)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block

-----Page Break-----

Q12 Which of these social media outlets do you use? (Check all that apply)

- Twitter (1)
- Instagram (2)
- Pinterest (3)
- Snapchat (4)
- Facebook (5)



Q13 How often do you engage with...	Several times a day (6)	About once a day (5)	3-5 days a week (4)	1-2 days a week (3)	Every few weeks (2)	Less often (1)
If Which of these social media outlets do you use? (Check all that apply) Twitter Is Selected Twitter (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If Which of these social media outlets do you use? (Check all that apply) Instagram Is Selected Instagram (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If Which of these social media outlets do you use? (Check all that apply) Pinterest Is Selected Pinterest (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>If Which of these social media outlets do you use? (Check all that apply) Snapchat Is Selected Snapchat (4)</p>	<input type="radio"/>					
<p>If Which of these social media outlets do you use? (Check all that apply) Facebook Is Selected Facebook (5)</p>	<input type="radio"/>					

-----Page Break-----

Q14 What is your preferred device to use when browsing social media?

- Cellphone (1)
- Smartphone (2)
- Desktop computer (3)
- Laptop computer (4)
- eBook reader (5)
- Tablet computer (i.e. Microsoft Surface, Apple iPad, Samsung Galaxy) (6)

Answer If What is your preferred device to use when browsing social media?

Smartphone Is Selected

Q15 What Smartphone operating system do you use?

- Android (1)
- Blackberry (2)
- Apple (3)
- Windows (4)



Q16 How accurate is content/information found on....

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Twitter Is Selected

_____ Twitter (1)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Instagram Is Selected

_____ Instagram (2)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Pinterest Is Selected

_____ Pinterest (3)

Invalid Logic Click Here to Edit Logic

_____ Snapchat (4)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Facebook Is Selected

_____ Facebook (5)

Q17 How credible is content/information found on....

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Twitter Is Selected

_____ Twitter (1)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Instagram Is Selected

_____ Instagram (2)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Pinterest Is Selected

_____ Pinterest (3)

Invalid Logic Click Here to Edit Logic

_____ Snapchat (4)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Facebook Is Selected

_____ Facebook (5)

Q18 How trustworthy is content/information found on....

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Twitter Is Selected

_____ Twitter (1)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Instagram Is Selected

_____ Instagram (2)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Pinterest Is Selected

_____ Pinterest (3)

Invalid Logic Click Here to Edit Logic

_____ Snapchat (4)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Facebook Is Selected

_____ Facebook (5)

Q19 How accurate is content/information about fresh produce found on....

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Twitter Is Selected

Twitter (1)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Instagram Is Selected

Instagram (2)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Pinterest Is Selected

Pinterest (3)

Invalid Logic Click Here to Edit Logic

Snapchat (4)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Facebook Is Selected

Facebook (5)

Q20 How credible is content/information about fresh produce found on....

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Twitter Is Selected

Twitter (1)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Instagram Is Selected

Instagram (2)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Pinterest Is Selected

Pinterest (3)

Invalid Logic Click Here to Edit Logic

Snapchat (4)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Facebook Is Selected

Facebook (5)

Q21 How trustworthy is content/information about fresh produce found on....

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Twitter Is Selected

Twitter (1)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Instagram Is Selected

Instagram (2)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Pinterest Is Selected

Pinterest (3)

Invalid Logic Click Here to Edit Logic

Snapchat (4)

If Which of these social media outlets do you use? Facebook Is Selected

Facebook (5)

-----Page Break-----

Q22 Do you eat fresh fruit?

Yes (1)

No (0)



Answer If Do you eat fresh fruit? Yes Is Selected

Q23 I eat fresh fruit because...

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
fresh fruit tastes good (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know fresh fruit is good for me (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fresh fruit is within my budget (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fresh fruit is easily accessible to me (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

-----Page Break-----

Answer If Do you eat fresh fruit? Yes Is Selected

Q24 Think about the last week. On the day that you ate the most fresh fruit, how many pieces of fruit did you eat?

_____ pieces of fruit (1)

Answer If Do you eat fresh fruit? Yes Is Selected

Q25 Think about the last week. On the day that you ate the least amount of fresh fruit, how many pieces of fruit did you eat?

_____ pieces of fruit (1)

-----Page Break-----

Q26 Do you eat fresh vegetables?

- Yes (1)
- No (0)



Answer If Do you eat fresh vegetables? Yes Is Selected

Q27 I eat fresh vegetables because...

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
fresh vegetables taste good (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know fresh vegetables are good for me (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fresh vegetables are within my budget (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fresh vegetables are easily accessible to me (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Answer If Do you eat fresh vegetables? Yes Is Selected

Q28 Think about the last week. On the day that you ate the most fresh vegetables, how many servings did you eat? (Serving size = 1/2 cup)

_____ servings (1)

Answer If Do you eat fresh vegetables? Yes Is Selected

Q29 Think about the last week. On the day that you ate the least fresh vegetables, how many servings did you eat? (Serving size = 1/2 cup)

_____ servings (1)



Q30 Do you purchase fresh fruit?

- Yes (1)
- No (0)

Answer If Do you purchase fresh fruit? Yes Is Selected

Q31 I purchase fresh fruit because...

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
fresh fruit tastes good (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know fresh fruit is good for me (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fresh fruit is within my budget (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fresh fruit is easily accessible to me (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

-----Page Break-----

Q32 Do you purchase fresh vegetables?

- Yes (1)
- No (0)



Answer If Do you purchase fresh vegetables? Yes Is Selected

Q33 I purchase fresh vegetables because...

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
fresh vegetables taste good (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know fresh vegetables are good for me (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fresh vegetables are within my budget (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fresh vegetables are easily accessible to me (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q34 In the last week, how many fresh produce promotion materials have you seen? (i.e. advertisements, flyers, commercials, graphics, videos)

_____ promotion materials (1)

If promotion materials Is Less Than 1, Then Skip To Would you be willing to participate i...

Q35 Where did you see these promotion materials? (Check all that apply)

- Internet (1)
- TV (2)
- Newspaper (3)
- Radio (4)
- Social Media (5)

-----Page Break-----

Q36 Would you be willing to participate in a group discussion about fresh produce advertising?

- Yes (1)
- No (0)



APPENDIX H

FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR SCRIPT

Good [*Morning/Afternoon/Evening*],

Welcome to the focus group, *College Students' Perceptions of Fresh Produce Advertisements*. My name is [insert name] and I will serve as the moderator this [*morning/afternoon/evening*]. First, I would like to introduce you to Brooke Prather. Brooke is a graduate student in the ALEC department working towards a master's degree in agricultural communications and journalism. Brooke has invited you to participate in this focus group to gather your feedback on different types of fresh produce advertisements.

Your feedback is valuable and greatly appreciated.

Upon arrival, you should have received a nametag with a number. This number will serve as your identification for the remainder of the focus group. Please note, your name will not be included in the research and your responses will remain confidential. Therefore, I encourage you to respond honestly and, out of respect for your fellow group members, please keep our conversation confidential.

Does anyone have any questions, thus far? [*Answer questions as needed.*]

Great. The focus group will be broken up into two parts and will last approximately 60 minutes. During part one, I will show you a series of advertisements and you will be asked to record the first five words that come to your mind. During part two, you will be asked to answer a series of open-ended questions. There is no right or wrong answer to these questions. We want to hear your honest opinion.

You will notice Brooke taking notes throughout the course of the focus group. This is to ensure that we collect accurate responses. Because of this, please speak clearly. You may be asked to speak up.

Are there any questions? [*Answer questions as needed.*] OK, let's get started.

If you would still like to participate in this study, please sign the consent form given to you upon arrival. [*Allow time for students to sign consent form.*]

Thank you.

[Only proceed when all consent forms have been received.]

Now that all consent forms have been received, we will move on. Upon arrival, you should have received six, colored and labeled index cards. Your index cards should look like this. *[Display index cards on board.]* If you did not receive the correct index cards, please raise your hand. *[Distribute index cards as needed.]*

During this focus group, you will see a total of six fresh produce advertisements. Each advertisement will be displayed on the board for 10 seconds. When I say, "Time is up," I will ask you to record the first five words that come to your mind. You will have 30 seconds to record your words on the respective index card.

Once all index cards are collected, I will show you each advertisement again and ask you a series of corresponding questions. To ensure consistency, you will be asked the same questions for each advertisement.

Treat this focus group as a conversation. You will all have the opportunity to respond to the questions and if you agree with someone's previous response, please share.

As mentioned previously, Brooke will be taking notes so please speak clearly. You may be asked to speak up.

Does anyone have any questions? *[Answer questions as needed.]*

PART I: SNAPCHAT APPROACH

Part one of this focus group will be carried out using a Snapchat approach. Meaning, you will see each advertisement for 10 seconds then you will have 30 seconds to record the first five words that come to your mind.

Once all six advertisements are shown, collectively as a group, you will have the opportunity to replay one of the advertisements. If you choose to replay an advertisement, it will be shown for an additional 10 seconds and you will have an additional 30 seconds to reflect on the first five words that came to your mind the first round.

Does anyone have any questions? *[Answer questions as needed.]*

OK, I will now show the first advertisement.

--

[Show first advertisement]

[After 10 seconds] Time is up.

Please record the first five words that come to your mind.

[After 30 seconds] Time is up.

--

[*Show second advertisement*]

[*After 10 seconds*] Time is up.

Please record the first five words that come to your mind.

[*After 30 seconds*]Time is up.

--

[*Show third advertisement*]

[*After 10 seconds*] Time is up.

Please record the first five words that come to your mind.

[*After 30 seconds*]Time is up.

--

[*Show fourth advertisement*]

[*After 10 seconds*] Time is up.

Please record the first five words that come to your mind.

[*After 30 seconds*]Time is up.

--

[*Show fifth advertisement*]

[*After 10 seconds*] Time is up.

Please record the first five words that come to your mind.

[*After 30 seconds*]Time is up.

--

[*Show sixth advertisement*]

[*After 10 seconds*] Time is up.

Please record the first five words that come to your mind.

[*After 30 seconds*]Time is up.

--

Now that you have seen all six advertisements, is there an advertisement you would like to replay? Take a few minutes to discuss amongst each other. [*If the group wants a replay, show the advertisement chosen for 10 seconds and allow 30 seconds for reflection.*]

At this time, we will take a five-minute break. Please take this time to stretch, go to the restroom, and enjoy the refreshments provided. [*Gather students after five-minutes to begin Part II.*]



PART II: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

During part two of this focus group, I will show each advertisement again and allow roughly eight minutes per advertisement for group discussion. I will call time when eight minutes has passed and promptly display the next advertisement.

Again, treat this as a conversation. Speak freely. Your answers will be kept confidential and your name will not be tied to the research.

I will now answer any questions that you have and if you have any questions throughout this section, please feel free to raise your hand. *[Answer questions as needed]*

OK, let's get started.

--

[Show first advertisement]

[After 8 minutes] Time is up. (Do not call time if a student is in the middle of a discussion.)

1. Have you ever seen this advertisement? If so, where?
2. What attracted your attention in this advertisement?
3. What did you like about this advertisement? Dislike?
4. How does this advertisement make you feel?
5. How does this advertisement motivate you to eat *[insert F/V being advertised]*?
6. How does this advertisement motivate you to purchase *[insert F/V being advertised]*?
7. How would you connect this advertisement to an aspect of your life?
8. What did you learn from this advertisement?

--

[Show second advertisement]

[After 8 minutes] Time is up. (Do not call time if a student is in the middle of a discussion.)

1. Have you ever seen this advertisement? If so, where?
2. What attracted your attention in this advertisement?
3. What did you like about this advertisement? Dislike?
4. How does this advertisement make you feel?
5. How does this advertisement motivate you to eat *[insert F/V being advertised]*?
6. How does this advertisement motivate you to purchase *[insert F/V being advertised]*?
7. How would you connect this advertisement to an aspect of your life?
8. What did you learn from this advertisement?

--

[Show third advertisement]

[After 8 minutes] Time is up. (Do not call time if a student is in the middle of a discussion.)

1. Have you ever seen this advertisement? If so, where?

2. What attracted your attention in this advertisement?
3. What did you like about this advertisement? Dislike?
4. How does this advertisement make you feel?
5. How does this advertisement motivate you to eat [insert F/V being advertised]?
6. How does this advertisement motivate you to purchase [insert F/V being advertised]?
7. How would you connect this advertisement to an aspect of your life?
8. What did you learn from this advertisement?

--

[Show fourth advertisement]

[After 8 minutes] Time is up. (Do not call time if a student is in the middle of a discussion.)

1. Have you ever seen this advertisement? If so, where?
2. What attracted your attention in this advertisement?
3. What did you like about this advertisement? Dislike?
4. How does this advertisement make you feel?
5. How does this advertisement motivate you to eat [insert F/V being advertised]?
6. How does this advertisement motivate you to purchase [insert F/V being advertised]?
7. How would you connect this advertisement to an aspect of your life?
8. What did you learn from this advertisement?

--

[Show fifth advertisement]

[After 8 minutes] Time is up. (Do not call time if a student is in the middle of a discussion.)

1. Have you ever seen this advertisement? If so, where?
2. What attracted your attention in this advertisement?
3. What did you like about this advertisement? Dislike?
4. How does this advertisement make you feel?
5. How does this advertisement motivate you to eat [insert F/V being advertised]?
6. How does this advertisement motivate you to purchase [insert F/V being advertised]?
7. How would you connect this advertisement to an aspect of your life?
8. What did you learn from this advertisement?

--

[Show sixth advertisement]

[After 8 minutes] Time is up. (Do not call time if a student is in the middle of a discussion.)

1. Have you ever seen this advertisement? If so, where?
2. What attracted your attention in this advertisement?
3. What did you like about this advertisement? Dislike?