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Generation-Z Enters the Advertising Workplace: Expectations Through a Gendered Lens

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Research

Generation-Z Enters the Advertising Workplace: Expectations Through a Gendered Lens

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Abstract

Generation-Z (Gen-Z) is entering the workforce with differing personal and professional expectations from previous generations. Further, those expectations tend to vary by gender. At the same time, workplace environments, and the social structures that underpin the workplace, are slow to change. Advertising is no exception.

As educators, we are just beginning our encounter with Gen-Z and their differing habits and expectations. Further, while these young women and men share many common experiences and expectations, their expectations are also influenced by their gendered experiences. Social capital theory helps us make sense of the findings as we explore the gaps between the expectations of Gen-Z and realities of the advertising industry within a changing world. Previous research has largely focused on what the advertising industry expects. However, there is little research exploring what future graduates expect and even less on Gen-Z or these students' expectations viewed through a gendered lens. This research explores the expectations of 98 Gen-Z students and suggests ways we, as advertising educators, might help them bridge the gap between expectations and the professional realities they will face.

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“I definitely hire people I find interesting—curious people.”

Susan Credle, Chief Creative Officer, FCB, New York

Credle’s quote (Bryant, 2012) speaks to the curiosity and passion young people will need to succeed in advertising. Yet her status as a woman executive in advertising belies the challenges young women and people of color face as they begin their journey in the world of advertising.

As advertising educators, we are now encountering the next generation of students—Generation-Z (Gen-Z). They will enter the workforce with very different expectations. Yet, they will also enter an advertising industry whose workplace environments, like many other industries, are slow to change. This study explores the workplace expectations of Gen-Z within a single advertising program. It also explores how gender might impact these expectations. Social capital theory is the contextual linchpin for making sense of the constructs that shape workplace environments. It also provides tools to explore the gaps between expectations and reality.

A number of prior studies have looked at advertising students’ career aspirations and/or the skill sets they need to succeed (Battle, Morimoto, & Reber, 2007; Beachboard & Weidman, 2013; Cooper & Tang, 2010; Fullerton, Kendrick, & Frazier, 2006, 2008; Neill & Schauster, 2015; Schlee & Harich, 2010; Windels, Mallia, & Broyles, 2013). Interestingly, Fullerton et al. (2006, 2008) found no differences in career goals based on gender. However, no study has attempted to tease out the intersections between students’ perceptions of advertising and the impact of gender on those perceptions. Providing future young professionals with knowledge about the environmental structures they will be entering and assessing their understanding of these environments is important. To that end, this study explores the career expectations and implications of gender among Gen-Z advertising students.

Generation-Z

Members of Gen-Z were born between 1996 and 2013 (Bernstein, 2015; Scott, 2016) and are the most diverse generation in U.S. history: fifty-five percent are Caucasian, 24% are Hispanic, 14% are African American, and 4% are Asian (Bernstein, 2015). While they share some similarities with Millennials, there are some important distinctions. Gen-Z has never known a world without the

Internet, they have a passion for privacy (think Snapchat and Whisper), prefer media in small bites, are pragmatic, and even a bit more cynical than Millennials (Elmore, 2015; Scott, 2016). Their awareness of managing their personal brands is also more acute than that of Millennials (Elmore, 2015; Fitch, 2015). Few Gen-Zers believe in the “American Dream” (Bernstein, 2015) and they are the least patriotic of any generation (Kane, 2017). Despite their cynicism, they are passionate about social change and crave a sense of purpose (Scott, 2016). Gen-Zers generally don’t hold fixed opinions and they have a tendency to see the world as acceptingly intersectional and equitable (Kane, 2017). Interestingly, only 26% of them say they got parental help with homework (Kane, 2017). Their unique cynicism, pragmatism, independence, and digital native status will impact our experience of them as learners.

Gender and Diversity

At the beginning of their careers, men and women display about equal desires for advancement; however, it is men who tend to win the first promotion (Waller & Lublin, 2015). Further, over their careers, men and women experience professional success differently. Women at senior levels often feel that they are competing on an uneven playing field, with networks that often exclude them (Acker, 1990; Billing, 2011; Williams, Muller, & Kilanski, 2012). Many women say that their gender costs them promotions (Waller & Lublin, 2015; Williams et al., 2012). Gender also costs women more as they become mothers, while men are financially rewarded for fatherhood (Budig, 2014). Women’s advancement is also complicated by the fact that “networks are fundamental to achieving professional success . . . [yet] networks are highly gendered” (Williams et al., 2012, p. 568). A recent survey of nearly 30,000 men and women across 118 North American companies found that “women certainly face a steeper path to the top than men do, making up just 17% of the population of the executive suite” (Waller & Lublin, 2015, p. R1). This may be, in part, because “a masculine norm is literally ‘built into’ management and aspects of organizations, requiring that an individual has to enact a masculine identity” (Lewis, 2014, p. 1847). This suggests that male privilege permeates organizational culture.

The concept of “a masculine norm” is an interesting place to begin a discussion of the advertising workplace. Agencies hawk branding expertise, strategic acumen, media placement, digital proficiency, and a range of other competencies. However, beyond all others skills, advertising sells creativity, and advertising creativity is a team sport. In advertising creative departments, men vastly outnumber women and women are virtually invisible at the top, with rare exceptions like Credle. According to 5 years of data drawn from Red Books, the leading advertising industry database, women hold 23.5% of the total creative positions (art directors, copywriters, creative directors), while in creative management (creative directors), women hold only 16.1% of the positions

(Deng & Grow, 2018). In the United States, women hold 26.1% of the total creative positions across the past 5 years; in creative management, they hold 17.5% of the positions (Deng & Grow, 2018). Others estimate the number of women in creative management to be much lower, at just 11% of all positions (Windels & Lee, 2012; Wohl & Stein, 2016). Across all advertising departments, the number of women in executive roles remains low. Crisp (2017) suggests women occupy only 30% of these positions. Tadema (2016) suggests a wider range, from as low as 18% across Omnicom agencies to as high as 31% among WPP agencies. Male privilege permeates advertising culture as well.

When it comes to diversity, the advertising industry fares no better. In the United Kingdom, the advertising industry employs only 12% people of color, with only 8% in senior leadership (Crisp, 2017). Data for the American advertising industry is far more difficult to find. However, according to the 2016 report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, advertising employees are 10.5% Hispanics, 6.6% African Americans, and only 5.7% Asian—which leaves it a very White industry at 77.2% of all employees. Change takes time. However, for women and people of color, the pace of change is all too slow.

Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory (Lin, 2001) helps provide context. It suggests that relationship networks determine the extent to which a person will succeed professionally. These networks determine access to information, provide a gateway to influence, and are the catalysts for augmenting change within an organization (Lin, 2001). Key to strong networking success is “soft skills.” These skills encompass interpersonal and communication skills, problem-solving, conceptual and analytical thinking, visual and oral presentations skills, and a sense of judgment (Windels et al., 2013). Additionally, soft skills also lead to more young adults effectively landing internships, which are crucial for success in advertising (Beachboard & Weidman, 2013; Yoo & Morris, 2015). Yoo and Morris (2015) also suggest that the more complex the job, the more soft skills are needed and the happier people working in advertising will be. Social psychology suggests that women tend to show strengths in the area of soft skills (Windels et al., 2013). Yet, these skills, which women excel in and which should bring job satisfaction, do not appear to benefit women to the same extent that they benefit men (Windels et al., 2013).

The social constructs within industrialized capitalism, upon which social capital is built, have created organizations, including advertising agencies, which perpetuate gender inequity. Acker posits that “organizational structure is not gender neutral” (1990, p. 139). In many cases, men have privileged positions in work environments, which function as their domain, while women, despite having found a foothold in organizational structures, remain the primary providers at home. Thus, women’s professional roles are often cast as secondary

domains. Further, capitalist organizations are predicated on “requiring that an individual has to enact a masculine identity” (Lewis, 2014, p. 1847). Lewis argues that it is essential to perform and embody “the feminine characteristics of nurture, emotion, passivity and attractiveness alongside the masculine traits of economic and emotional independence, assertiveness, rationality and autonomy” (2014, pp. 1851–1852). This is complicated by the reality that when women display traits that are socially attributed to femininity, such as soft skills, these traits are often not recognized as professional (Carlson, 2011; Lewis, 2014; Williams et al., 2012). Further, “Women are given disproportionately less credit than men for the success they achieve when they work on teams in male-dominated environments” (Williams et al., 2012, p. 557). Social constructs, and the social capital upon which they are built, matter within the workplace.

To explore these social constructs, within the context of the expectations Gen-Z has of what they will likely encounter in the advertising workplace, the following research questions are proposed.

RQ 1. What are the professional expectations current students have regarding their transition into the world of advertising?

RQ 2. What are the personal expectations current students have regarding how their transition into the world of advertising will impact their private lives?

RQ 3; Does gender play a role in professional and personal expectations of these future advertising professionals and if so how are those differences expressed?

Methods

Data were gathered from a survey conducted at a private, Midwestern university during fall 2016 and spring 2017. A convenience sample of 98 students pursuing advertising majors or minors of senior and junior academic standing was built by surveying students enrolled in two required upper-division advertising courses (media or planning). A survey was chosen over interviews in order to obtain a diversity of responses. All students were guaranteed anonymity and completion took approximately 15 min.

Questions were developed, in part, based on one coauthor’s previous research on creative women in advertising. This earlier research had particular influence on questions that would elicit comparisons between women and men regarding work/life balance. Discussions with industry professionals were also used to develop some questions. Other questions were influenced by trends within other academic programs (Fullerton et al., 2006, 2008), though direct comparison could not be drawn. Finally, questions on the economic and educational background of students’ families were added to enrich our understanding of diversity within this sample.

The survey consisted of 34 questions: 17 closed-ended, 10 open-ended, and 7 questions to verify demographic information. The closed-ended, quantitative questions were analyzed using chi-square or t-tests to compare male and female students' expectations. Content analysis of open-ended questions was used to facilitate a systematic study of thematic findings. Of 1,470 answers, 158 were disputed. The coauthors discussed the disputed answers and discarded those remaining in dispute, resulting in a percentage of agreement of 89.25%. Finally, themes across categories were analyzed to create a holistic picture of the expectations of the Gen-Z students within this study.

Findings

Of the 98 students who participated in the survey, 74.6% of respondents pursued a primary major in advertising or graphic design, 18.3% pursued public relations or corporate communication majors, and 7.1% pursued other communication disciplines as their primary major. Whites made up 81.6% of the sample, with 16.3% non-White (mostly Latinos) and 2.1% who did not respond. Women made up 62.2% of the sample, while men comprised 37.8%. The majority of the students had parents who attended and/or graduated from college: 87.8% of fathers attended college, with 72.5% completing bachelor's or advanced degrees and 91.8% of mothers attended college, and with 70.4% completing bachelor's or advanced degrees. Just 6.1% of the respondents were first-generation students.

Professional Expectations

Nine survey questions were analyzed to explore the first research question: "What are the professional expectations current students have regarding their transition into the world of advertising?" The Gen-Z respondents offered a diverse set of insights.

We began by asking students to "briefly describe your career" as an open-ended question to allow for unique responses. Answers fell into seven thematic categories: agency side (30), sports marketing (16), personal fulfillment (14), client-side (11), production (10), entertainment and events (8), and outliers (7), with two respondents who did not know. Twenty women and 10 men expressed an interest in the agency side, with 19 interested in creative (13 women, 6 men). Data, social, planning, and account management were also mentioned. Sports marketing was evenly split between women and men. Client-side was dominated by women, with only two men among nine women. Personal fulfillment skewed female, with 4 men and 10 women, and focused on nonprofits as an employer and finding "a purpose I believe in." Production was largely focused on photography and video, with seven women and three men. Entertainment and events was evenly split between men and

women, with men interested in comedy and music and women interested in event planning and entertainment. Surprisingly, only 41 out of 98, or 40.1%, chose a traditional path to either the agency-side or client-side as their dream job. Finally, high interest in creative roles parallel that in earlier studies (Fullerton et al., 2006, 2008), although in this sample, a desire to work in creative appears to skew toward women.

We explored respondents' perceptions of the advertising industry by asking them the following open-ended question, "What two words come to mind when you think about the advertising industry?" Nine categories emerged: creative (50), effortful (34), ever changing (31), exciting (18), strategic (17), money (10), negative sentiment (10), male dominated (9), and media and entertainment (9) with six outliers. The creative category is fairly straightforward, regularly described by respondents as "creative." Effortful suggested an "intensive" and "competitive" focus. Creative and effortful, as descriptors of advertising were evenly split among men and women. Ever changing was commonly characterized as "evolving" and "innovation" and also evenly shared by both women and men. Money was referred to as "money" and "profit." Negative sentiments such as "deception, corrupt," and "racist" were shared equally by women and men. However, the nine male-dominated comments characterized by "driven by men" and "sexist," were exclusively cited by women. Finally, media and entertainment was a mishmash of "media, digital," and "television" and stated by both women and men. Interestingly, the respondents had few comments directly related to technology.

In an effort to understand Gen-Z's expectations of future managers, we asked respondents the following open-ended question, "In a few words describe your ideal boss." There were 274 distinct responses, which clustered into five thematic categories: fair and confident leadership (67), soft skills (65), friendly and open-minded (51), passionately motivating (49), and kind and understanding (42). When it comes to leadership, Gen-Z respondents are looking for "fairness, respect, leads by example, focused on CSR" and "promoter of work/life balance." Soft skills ranked highly, including qualities such as "flexible, organized, empathetic," and "good listener." Respondents expressed interest in having "friendly, open-minded," and "relatable" supervisors. Yet, they also hope to find passionately motivating managers. They often commented about some to "stretch my creativity" or who "pushes me to get better." Finally, respondents are looking for "understanding" and "kindness," which they also expressed as "caring with a nice personality." There was no substantial difference in the descriptions shared by women and men.

Strengths and challenges were explored using open-ended questions. First, respondents were asked, "What are two strengths that you feel will allow you to be successful in advertising?" All respondents answered for a total of 196 responses, from which six thematic categories emerged. Above all others was soft skills (76), followed by creative skills (43), drive (39), and work ethic (27).

Specific knowledge (7) and leadership skills (4) were less notable categories. Similar to previous answers, soft skills focused on “interpersonal skills, communication, teamwork,” and “empathy.” Creative is self-explanatory. Drive was expressed as “drive, motivated to do my best” and “fearless.” Work ethic entailed qualities such as “strong work ethic, don’t mind long hours” and “honest.” The specific knowledge category addressed “business skills” and “experience,” while “leadership” defined leadership skills. Both women and men had a noteworthy focus on soft skills.

Next respondents were asked the following open-ended question, “What are the two biggest challenges that you may need to overcome to better your chances for success in advertising?” There were 175 responses, from which seven categories emerged. Soft skills (65) again tops the list as a challenge that must be met, followed by drive (47). The next categories have less salience and are experience (16), creative skills (16), and new knowledge (13), followed by social concerns (13) and organizational culture (5). Soft skills were defined as learning to “work in a group, accepting criticism, time management” and “writing skills.” Drive was reflected in comments such as overcoming “shyness and fear” or addressing the need to feel “confident” and “motivated.” Creative skills were defined as “creative” and “having a good portfolio.” New knowledge focused on concrete knowledge skills such as “learning software, data, math” and “having knowledge of other brands.” Social concerns had two aspects. Seven comments addressed “gender bias” and one mentioned “racial bias,” while three focused on “society, family” and “student loan debt.” Organizational culture focused on “ethical advertising, morality” and “hours.” The larger categories demonstrated no gender differences. However, social concerns and organization culture skewed toward women, with 16 of the 18 comments stated by women.

Using a simple closed-ended question, respondents were queried about their perceptions of the benefits of an advanced degree versus experience. They were asked, “What do you think is most beneficial to your advancement in the advertising industry: a postgraduate degree or experience?” A full 94.9% saw experience as most beneficial.

Respondents were then asked about positions of interest. They were asked, “In what types of advertising positions are you most interested?” Seventeen specified positions were listed and respondents were allowed to select as many as applied. They were also given the option to write-in positions. Client-side positions in marketing and brand management are of most interest, with agency-side traffic and product director of least interest (see Figure 1).

Next, respondents were queried about job skills. They were asked, “What are the most important job skills that will lead to a successful career in advertising?” A list of 14 skills was provided and respondents were allowed to select as many as applied. They were also given the option to write-in skills. Creativity and

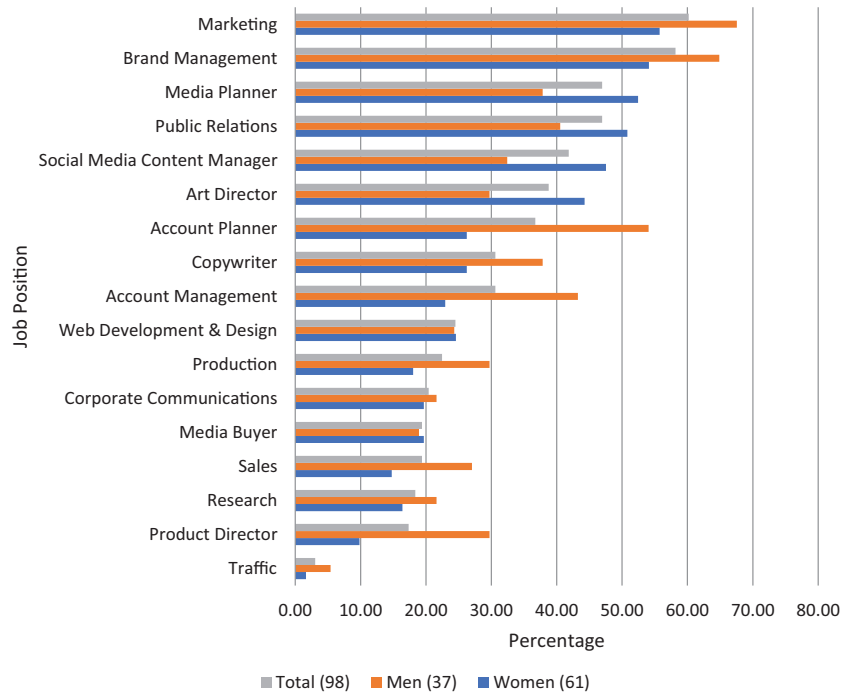


Figure 1. Positions of interest.

communication skills are considered most important, with liberal arts and business literacy considered of least importance (see Figure 2).

A final open-ended question exploring professional expectations provides a bridge to findings on personal expectations. Respondents were asked, “When looking forward across your professional lifetime, what are the three most important HR benefits you hope that companies you work will offer?” From 229 responses, 5 thematic categories emerged: Health-care benefits (60) and financial stability (60) were tied as most important, followed closely by flextime and/or family time (52) and supportive work environment (40), with upward mobility (17) as a distant fifth category. Health-care benefits comments included “health care, dental, medical,” as well as “mental health opportunities.” Financial stability was framed by “good pay, retirement benefits, stock options” and “bonuses.” Family and/or flextime was characterized as “family leave, family-friendly benefits, work/life balance” and “work remotely.” Supportive work environment was characterized as having a “close-knit work environment, respect, loyalty” and “teamwork,” many of which

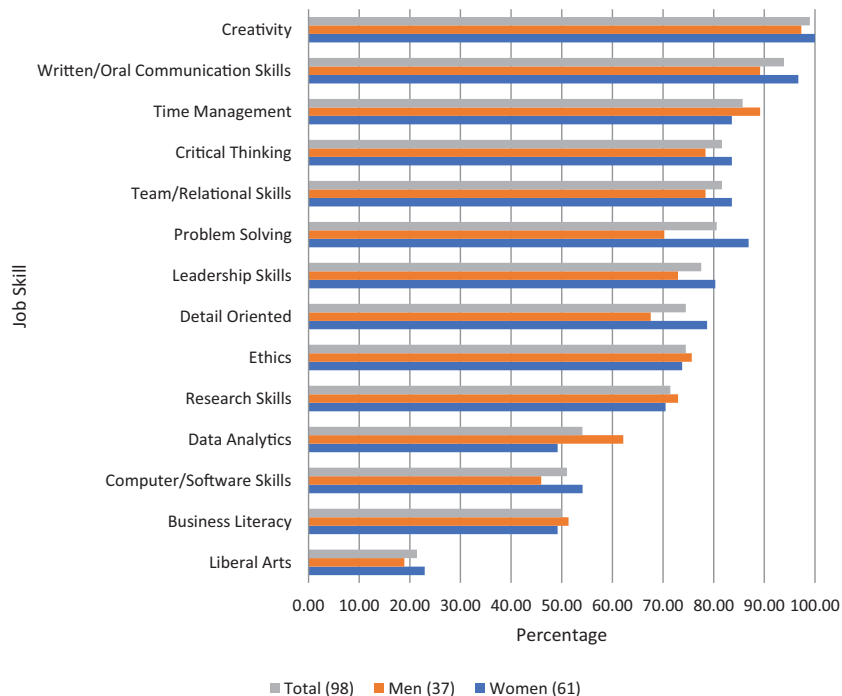


Figure 2. Job skills required.

reflect soft skills. Upward mobility was framed by “equal opportunities, learning/networking opportunities, pay for grad school,” and “upward mobility.” Response trends are similar among both genders. However, flex and/or family time skewed toward women (35), compared to men (17).

Personal Expectations

To answer the second research question “What are the personal expectations current students have regarding how their transition into the world of advertising will impact their private lives?” an interconnected series of close-ended questions were used. Statistical analysis using chi-square or t-test was employed.

Respondents were asked, “Is having a family something you see as a possibility in your future?” Both men and women expressed strong interests in having a family, with 93.3% of women and 94.6% of men stating they see a family in their future. When asked about the ideal time to begin having children, the majority, 93.4% of men and 77.8% of women, thought between age 28 and 33 years was the best time. Only 13.9% of men and just 1.6% of women thought

starting a family after age 33 years was better. Beliefs about how children will impact their careers also varied. When asked, “Do you believe your employment opportunities will be helped, hindered or not effected by having children?” the majority of women, 55%, thought children would hinder their employment opportunities, while 43.2% of men thought the same. More men, 48.6%, thought their employment would be unaffected by children, while 36.7% of women thought the same. Slightly more than 8% of both women and men thought children would help their career trajectory.

We then explored expectations for parental leave by asking, “After having a child and assuming the company you work for offers paid paternity leave, would you take it?” Results showed that 100% of women and 91.9% of men said they would take the leave. Further, 86.4% of women and 91.9% of men said they would also expect their partner to take paid family leave. However, the time varied as to how much women and men would take. Results from the t-test indicate that women are more likely to take more weeks of paid parental leave ($M = 5.41$, $SD = .87$) than men ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.49$; $t_{47.619} = -4.12$, $p < .000$, equal variances not assumed). Further, men are more likely to expect their partner to take more weeks of paid parental leave ($M = 5.07$, $SD = 1.53$) than women are ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 2.10$) ($t_{91.764} = 2.86$, $p < .005$, equal variances not assumed). Specifically, assuming that 6 weeks of paid family leave was offered, women indicated the following expectations for leave-taking for themselves: 62.3% would take the full 6 weeks, while just 32.4% of men expected to take the full 6 weeks. When it came to expectations of their partners, 37.7% of women expected their partners to take the full 6 weeks, while 36% expected their partner to take 3 to 5 weeks and 22.9% expected their partner to take only 1 to 2 weeks. For men, 59.5% expected their partner to take the full 6 weeks, while 35.1% expected their partner to take 3 to 5 weeks and 5.4% expected their partner to take only 1 to 2 weeks. Generally, expectations among women were higher for themselves and lower for their partners. This reversed with men; they generally had lower expectations for themselves, but higher for their partners. In the end, expectations were stereotypically matched.

When asked, “Assuming both you and your partner work fulltime, who would you expect to take time off when your child is sick?” once again, women had higher expectations in terms of their responsibilities. Additionally, more women than men expect to share sick childcare with their partners ($\chi^2_2 = 6.93$, $p < .05$). Specifically, 70.5% of women and 61.1% of men expected both parents to share those duties. However, 24.6% of women and 16.7% of men expected the responsibility to fall to themselves, while 4.9% of women and 22.2% of men expected the responsibility to fall to their partners. Again, respondents expressed stereotypically similar expectations, which suggest the expectation that women would bear the burden of childcare.

When asked, “After you have a child, do you believe you will be paid more, the same or less than a person of the opposite gender who also has children?”

there were stark gender differences. Among men, 25% thought they would be paid more because they had children and only 1.7% of women thought the same, while 38.3% percent of women and 2.8% of men thought that they would be paid less because they had children. Men, 72.2% of them, thought children would not have an impact on their salary, while 60% of women thought this as well ($\chi^2_2 = 23.66, p < .000$). Once again, respondents' expectations reflect stereotypical expectations.

Gender Expectations

Gender expectations are explored in the third research question: "Does gender play a role in professional and personal expectations of these future advertising professionals and if so how are those differences expressed?" This question has been touched upon in the two previous sections, as gender is an unavoidable variable. However, two survey questions specifically focused on gender.

To begin, respondents were asked to "describe your gender." Just one person stated a fluid definition, while 97 respondents identified as male or female. Thus, gender fluidity has minimal, if any, impact on this data. However, perceptions of gender equity are varied, as determined by the respondents' answers to "What best describes your understanding of gender equality today versus gender equality in 1972, which is likely when your parents were in grammar school?" Among all respondents, 79.5% believe that gender equality is better (62.2%) or much better (17.3%) than it was in 1972, the year Title IX was passed, while 12.2% believe it is worse (10.2%) or much worse (2.0%). However, when we look at the data through a gendered lens, the gender divide comes into sharp focus. Among women, only 5% think that gender equity is much better and 70% think it is better, while 5% think it is about the same. On the other hand, 28.6% of men think gender equity is much better and 50% think it is better, while 14.3% think it is about the same. Yet, 15% of women think gender equity is worse and 5% think it is much worse. Among men, only 7.1% think gender equity is worse and absolutely no men think it is much worse. Experience, likely shaped by male privilege, surely plays an important role in the respondents' perceptions of gender equity.

These perceptions play out in other parts of these data. For instance, in terms of parental leave after childbirth and the task of caring for sick children, gender-bound expectations remain, with women still expected to bear more responsibility. Many of the women respondents were also aware of the wage gap that they are likely to experience, just as the literature suggests (Budig, 2014). Women's knowledge of the wage gap and the women respondents' perceptions of gender equity suggest that these Gen-Z women may already have an awareness of the bureaucracy and hierarchy that male-dominated industries have created (Acker, 1990; Lewis, 2014; Williams et al., 2012). Further, any commentary on gender inequality or lack of racial diversity was stated predominately

by women respondents. Gen-Z, with their tendency toward acceptance of differences, along with a passion for social change, may find themselves with the dubious task of unmasking their own unconscious biases, while unmasking the built-in inequities that, as the literature suggests, permeate the advertising industry (Deng & Grow, 2018; Grillo, 2015; Windels et al., 2013).

Discussion

The Gen-Zers within this study exemplify many of the hallmarks of their generation. They have a passion for social change and they crave purpose (Scott, 2016). They are independent and they view the world as moving toward accepting intersectionalities (Kane, 2017). These respondents are looking for stability and demonstrate less interest in money and more interest in personal fulfillment, just as Elmore (2015) and Scott (2016) suggest of their generation. They also strongly view experience as more valuable than graduate degrees when it comes to career advancement, which suggests that advertising educators need to place significant importance on quality internship programs. This cohort also appears to undervalue business literacy, which suggests that this is a hole that advertising educators need to fill.

The pragmatism of this generation (Elmore, 2015) is demonstrated by this cohort's focus on soft skills, which noted the importance of soft skills as both a necessary strength and an important quality in a good boss. Scholars have also noted that the power of soft skills is not equally experienced by men and women (Beachboard & Weidman, 2013; Windels et al., 2013; Yoo & Morris, 2015). Yet, as a whole, this cohort does not seem to have an awareness of this sexist discrepancy and its impact on women. This is problematic as soft skills open up networks that become gateways to influence. At the same time, we know that "networks are highly gendered" (Williams et al., 2012, p. 568). The women of this study appear to understand that advertising, like many other industries, is still a masculine industry (Lewis, 2014). Still, women will likely not be acknowledged positively in the same way as men are for their soft skills, and this will likely negatively impact their careers. This is something advertising educators should work to educate their students about.

The women (and men) within this study also appear aware of the wage gap they are likely to experience, just as Budig (2014) suggests. Further, both men and women within this cohort understand that gender will likely cost women promotions, and parenthood will positively reward men while punishing women (Budig, 2014). At the same time, these Gen-Zers appear to have stereotypical expectations for childcare and parental leave, with women assuming that more of the responsibly will fall to them and with men supporting this belief. Yet, despite some stereotypical views, it appears that the women of this cohort may bridle against being required "to enact a masculine identity" (Lewis, 2014, p. 1847).

However, there are some limitations with this cohort. First, a larger sample size would enhance the results. Second, sampling from private and public institutions, as well as broadening the geographic range, would provide more nuanced findings. Finally, by using this study as a pilot, follow-up interviews would be useful for deepening our understanding of Gen-Z's expectations and the factors that drive them.

Upon reflection, it is clear that the social capital (Lin, 2001) that frames men and women's experiences in the advertising workplace still benefits men more than women. Gender bias and the industry's propensity toward homogeneity pose substantial limitations with significantly negative consequences for the industry and its workers, especially for women. As Grillo (2015) states, "The advertising industry stands to benefit more than most, by cultivating a highly diverse and inclusive environment that reflects the changing demographics around us." The findings of this study suggest that we advertising educators should use our knowledge and privilege to speak out about the gender inequities and the systemic structures that support these inequalities, for it is our students who will be the future facilitators of change. Additionally, advertising educators should work in concert with admissions and student affairs to recruit and retain a more diverse pool of advertising students, while helping them find relevant internships and outreach programs. Finally, inequities, be they gender, racial, or of any other kind, should not be the exclusive topics of ethics classes. Rather, discussions of inequities should be woven into each and every advertising class we teach. For as Thomas states, "If equality is ever to be obtained, we, too, must address the ways in which privilege circulates in the industry systemically and within its cultural practices" (Thomas, 2017, p. 13).

We close, returning to Susan Credle's words, "I definitely hire people I find interesting—curious people." Curiosity will open the door for Gen-Z, as it always has. However, for the women of Gen-Z, curiosity will not be enough. As long as American advertising looks very little like America and remains a bastion of masculine power, the industry's curiosity quotient will remain diminished and so too will its creative output. To remain relevant, the advertising industry, and with it, advertising education, must evolve.

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