

# Making multicultural millennials healthy: The influence of health 'edutainment' and other drivers on health-oriented diet change

Received (in revised form): 11th May, 2019



## Tyrha M. Lindsey-Warren

is a clinical assistant professor of marketing at Baylor University. She has over 15 years of experience working in marketing and communications in corporate America, Hollywood and nonprofit arenas for such firms as Quincy Jones-David Salzman Entertainment, NBC, Creative Artists Agency, LAI Communications and UniWorld Group. Dr Lindsey-Warren speaks nationally on the topics of ethnic marketing, digital marketing, effective communications and empowered leadership. Her research streams are rooted in narrative transportation theory (storytelling), media and advertising, health edutainment, the emotion of empowerment, millennials and movies.

Baylor University, Department of Marketing, 1 Bear Place #98007, Waco, TX 76798, USA  
E-mail: tyrha\_lindsey@baylor.edu



## Charlene A. Dadzie

is an assistant professor of marketing at University of South Alabama. Prior to her career in academia, she held positions at Accenture and GE. Her research interests include topics from consumer behaviour, international marketing and the intersection of marketing and public policy, including using imagination as a persuasive tool, marketplace inclusion, firm strategy in emerging markets and subsistence consumer/producers. Her work has been published in the *Journal of African Business*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Channels* and *Journal of Product and Brand Management*.

University of South Alabama, Department of Marketing, Mobile, AL 36688, USA  
E-mail: cdadzie@southalabama.edu

**Abstract** Is society doing enough to improve health outcomes for non-white millennials? Are marketing and advertising campaigns effective, especially when it comes to reaching millennials? Within the USA, explicit consideration is now being given to the role of the media in influencing millennials' perceptions of healthy living. Drawing on theories of expanded cognitive elaboration and storytelling, this research proposes a communication strategy for marketing, advertising and digital scholars and practitioners who want to address health issues for multicultural millennials. Incorporating qualitative and experimental design methods, this study finds that by bolstering self-identity and employing health 'edutainment', it is possible to have a positive impact on the health intentions and behaviours of the millennial generation

**KEYWORDS:** millennials, health, edutainment, diet, empowerment, multicultural

‘The new generation may have had health-consciousness drilled into them at home or in school. But they have raised it to a new level. For millennials, food isn’t just food. It’s community.’<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

As illustrated by the following comment, today’s multicultural millennials want to be healthy in mind, body and spirit, as well as achieve a well-balanced lifestyle:

‘My perfect health would just be, you know, being able to run fast, jump, and breathe good, and not be able to, you know, have sicknesses a lot.’ (Andre, age 21, nonprofit programme participant)

‘I’ve been on my own kind of journey towards having better mental health myself. I’ve been trying to eliminate all the negative things in my life that I don’t need, and to put just positive things and things that lift me up.’ (Denise, age 19, nonprofit programme participant)

These comments from millennials acknowledge their desire for wellness and good health outcomes for themselves. Among US millennials, over 9 million are identified as being overweight.<sup>2</sup> These overweight young people engage in a sedentary lifestyle that often begins in childhood. Adult millennials are currently experiencing increased rates of chronic illnesses. Here, however, it is important to question what resources are available to them to support their wellness, as well as how the private and public sectors communicate health messages to millennials. There is a desperate need for research that indicates the best types of storytelling and messaging to connect with millennials and their health concerns. For example, public service announcements about smoking tend to communicate fear, while messaging about diabetes and obesity generally adopts a more depressing approach. Moreover, the constant bombardment of health disparity messaging is so oppressive that the multicultural

audiences being targeted appear to have become numb to it. Thus, it is unclear whether health messaging is inducing sustainable changes in the attitudes and behaviours of target audiences in general, never mind millennials. For this reason, the present research seeks to identify a marketing and communications method capable of bringing about lasting behavioural changes and increasing the wellbeing for millennials.

Moreover, given the pervasive impact of media in the lives of millennials, this study contends that health ‘edutainment’ offers a means to improve health outcomes for a generation known to be quite self-absorbed. Similarly, the authors assert that by identifying the drivers that influence health behaviours, such as diet and food choice, family and peers, environment, as well as mental health capacity, marketers will increase their ability to execute high-impact narratives within the marketing and promotional mix in order to deliver integrated marketing communications in a relevant manner to millennials.

## CURRENT STATE OF MILLENNIALS

The enigma that is the millennial generation is something that continues to keep advertisers and marketers up at night. The current and future market power of millennials is undeniable. Within the USA today, the millennial population (ages 20–34) accounts for over 92 million people. Millennials have significant economic power as they enter their prime spending years. They are more tech-savvy than older generations, and love social media. It has been said that millennials mastered the smartphone by the age of ten.<sup>3</sup> Millennials are also more health conscious than previous generations.<sup>4,5</sup>

However, millennials also live in a world where they are constantly exposed to various forms of media. Smartphones, apps, iTunes, Twitter, Hulu, text messaging and Instagram, are just a few of the myriad channels that

continuously entertain millennials. Given the constant barrage of media in the lives of millennials, it is only reasonable to question the effect of this media-laden environment on the health and wellbeing of millennials.

One disturbing health trend among millennials is the increased incidence of obesity. Within the USA, sedentary lifestyles among millennials are linked to high levels of media consumption.<sup>6</sup> While white Americans watch an average of 140 hours of television per month (35 hours per week),<sup>7</sup> it is estimated that African Americans have four televisions per household and watch 213 hours of television per month,<sup>8</sup> and that Latino Americans watch 33 hours per week and stream over 6 hours of video per month.<sup>9</sup> It is with this in mind that via such programmes as former First Lady Michelle Obama's 'Let's Move' and the National Football League's 'PLAY 60' campaigns, society is now focusing on the use of media and authentic storytelling to directly combat sedentary lifestyles. This societal change is especially promising for millennials given the evidence that films and television programmes that are constructive, relevant and entertaining can play an influential role in addressing health issues.<sup>10</sup> Thus, to make this generation of young people healthier, media, especially digital, will provide the necessary solution.

Furthermore, in addition to the sedentary lifestyle millennials are experiencing due to their media intake, diet is also a driver of the US obesity epidemic.<sup>11</sup> Fortunately, many millennials are recognising the link between diet and overall health and wellbeing. Consequently, they are increasingly looking for ways to reduce calorie consumption and increase their intake of nutrient-dense foods.<sup>12</sup> This shift in health behaviour represents an opportunity for public and private organisations to generate information and increase products and services geared towards health-oriented behaviour, including healthy diet choices. However, this opportunity centres on effectively

reaching millennials who are interested in exploring the health benefits associated with healthy eating. Taking advantage of this opportunity demands that public and private organisations understand the relevant attitudinal drivers of millennials' health choices and communicate accordingly.

In all, the present research aims to uncover new insights on how to reach millennials with effective storytelling that will improve their health outcomes. The paper demonstrates that millennials have a strong desire to see themselves in a healthy manner and want to achieve positive wellbeing in terms of mind, body and spirit. Additionally, the findings regarding the association between attitudes, health intentions and behaviours, subjective norm and self-health identity provide significant insights into the drivers of health-oriented diet change and food choice behaviour for millennials. Thus, the results of this research also shed light on three categories of drivers of healthy diet intentions: cost and access to healthy food, social factors and individuals' self-identity as it pertains to health consciousness. The paper next uncovers the manner in which marketers and advertisers should communicate health messaging to millennials. This delivery method should work to educate and entertain them as well as include elements that are highly relatable, relevant, frequent and personalised. As a result, the research contributes to the call for advertising, communications and social marketing research that incorporates concepts from other fields into the domain of social marketing.<sup>13</sup>

In what follows, the paper presents the literature on millennials' health behaviour as well as the construct of health edutainment. Next, it discusses the research methodology and findings. Finally, it concludes with future directions and implications for advertisers, public relations professionals and content producers regarding how to make millennials healthier.

## **MULTICULTURAL MILLENNIALS' HEALTH BEHAVIOURS AND THE STORIES THEY TELL THEMSELVES**

Social influence represents a major factor underpinning health behaviours associated with eating.<sup>14</sup> Even more so, social considerations such as the prevailing beliefs of referent peer groups, or even individual factors, like millennials' self-identity regarding health orientation, are likely to be crucial determinants of diet choice behaviour. These social and personal considerations are especially relevant for millennial consumers who are at a critical juncture in their personal and social development.<sup>15</sup> However, the extant research has yet to empirically demonstrate this link.

One of the basic and widely used models to explain consumer intentions to engage in a given behaviour is the theory of planned behaviour (TPB).<sup>16</sup> According to this model, behaviour is the culmination of four discrete factors. Attitude towards a given behaviour, such as eating a new health-oriented vegetarian diet, along with the perceived importance of this behaviour to other reference people or groups (referred to as the subjective norm) and the perceived control a consumer has over the behaviour, join together to form a behaviour intention. According to the TPB, the more positive the person's attitude, the stronger the subjective norms and the greater the perceived control over the behaviour, the more likely it is that the person will intend to perform the behaviour. Several meta-analyses have shown that behavioural intention is predictable from the three components of the TPB.<sup>17-19</sup>

An individual's sense of self or self-identity is also relevant to determining health behaviours among millennials. Self-identity refers to the salient and enduring aspects of one's self-perception (eg 'I think of myself as a healthy eater'). That is, self-identity is a reliable driver of behaviour after taking into account social norms and attitudes towards that behaviour.<sup>20,21</sup>

## **Self-referent processing**

Millennials have been described as the 'selfie' generation. They view much of the world through a 'self-absorbed' and 'always-on' lens enabled by social media. Does this vantage point positively or negatively impact the health outcomes of multicultural millennials?

In the extant literature, self-referent processing is the theoretical perspective that best addresses the self-absorbed behaviour exuded by many millennials. It refers to a consumer information processing method that produces benefits such as extended memory and recall, as well as enhanced attention and persuasion. Self-referent processing is a cognitive operation that allows individuals to absorb incoming information in a manner where they can also visualise themselves in the situation.<sup>22</sup> Individuals who use this type of cognitive process learn and recall information more easily than their counterparts. Self-referent processing also enhances highly organised cognitive elaboration as part of the persuasion process.<sup>23</sup> It can also have an impact on the effectiveness of advertising copy.<sup>24</sup> When study participants linked the message from the visuals and copy from the advertisement to themselves, persuasion was positively enhanced.<sup>25</sup>

Given that self-referent processing is highly emotional and affective, and relies on the retrieval of autobiographical information from episodic memory, it is a form of cognitive information processing that uses narrative and analytical information. Specifically, autobiographical memories tell stories and can involve emotion, which are memories that millennials tend to remember.<sup>26</sup>

## **Role of imagination and positive affect**

This study draws upon the imagination literature to understand the delicate balance between multicultural millennials' actual versus perceived health status and

behaviours. Imagination has been shown to increase information recall, positively impact attitudes<sup>27</sup> and perception of risk,<sup>28</sup> as well as play a role in the impact of health promotion messages. For example, by increasing elaboration,<sup>29</sup> imagining a scenario has been shown to impact both the perceived likelihood that an event will take place and subsequent behaviour.<sup>30</sup> For this reason, the role of the imagination is incorporated in the present inquiry. Multicultural millennials who imagine or have a pre-existing strong belief about the extent to which healthiness is actually part of their own self are less likely to have an interest in modifying their existing diets, which should already be healthy.

In addition, positive affect encompasses multicultural millennials' primary reactions to stimuli, resulting in feelings that make it possible to have a positive mood. Positive affect also impacts learning and decision-making. It influences social interaction and can lead to assisting others, kindness and personal compassion. Ashby and Isen<sup>31</sup> suggest that positive affect greatly influences the outcomes of cognitive elaboration, including memory recall, rehearsal, creative problem solving, and even enhanced attention. They explain that the release of dopamine in the brain is responsible for these outcomes. Isen<sup>32</sup> states that positive affect augments learning and can lead to innovation, creativity and cognitive flexibility. It can also encourage an open mind and organisation, as well as positively impact doctor-patient communication. Finally, in the spirit of Holbrook and Hirschman,<sup>33</sup> positive affect may lead to millennials' fantasies, feelings and fun. Entertainment products like movies, television and plays arouse these perceived whimsical feelings among multicultural millennials and may actually fulfil their salient emotional desires and needs. Therefore, it is perhaps the stories that multicultural millennials tell themselves as well as consume that may positively or negatively influence their health outcomes.

## BACKGROUND ON HEALTH EDUTAINMENT

One type of storytelling that has been shown to influence health behaviour is known as 'edutainment'. The extant literature on edutainment focuses on learning and the educational process.<sup>34</sup> Specifically, 'edutainment' refers to programming that educates and entertains simultaneously. In the public health and policy arenas, Singhal and Rogers refer to edutainment as 'entertainment education' or 'transformation entertainment'.<sup>35</sup> This suggests that entertainment education generally has a greater impact than traditional education or entertainment programming. Edutainment can be utilised as a communications strategy that affects behaviour and attitude change. It can also galvanise social change at the individual, communal and societal levels. Scholars believe that the success of edutainment stems from its use of storytelling, reliance on engaging plot lines and authentic characters, and its avoidance of a preachy or educational tone of voice.<sup>36</sup>

## HYPOTHESES

The key components of edutainment are imagery and messaging (or storytelling). MacInnis and Price<sup>37</sup> define 'imagery' as the representation of any sensory experience in working memory, ranging from a few simple and vague images to many complex and clear images. Additionally, Bone and Ellen<sup>38</sup> argue that 'imagery processing is better viewed as a continuum'<sup>39</sup> and 'it is expected that persuasive messages evoking greater imagery results in strong attitudes toward the ad, attitude toward the brand (or product) and behavioural intentions'.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, Bone and Ellen<sup>41</sup> illustrate the importance of a focal character featured in imagery. The prominence of a focal character in advertising imagery directly affects consumer attitudes toward the advertisement and toward the brand. Dramatic appeals also have the advantage of



using characters and story to portray a direct experience with the goal of arousing feelings and emotions from the audience.<sup>42</sup>

The present research refers to 'health edutainment' as an effective tool to impact millennials' health intentions and behaviours. Past research has shown that broadcasters who used airtime to increase knowledge about HIV/AIDS through storytelling had a positive impact on people's behaviours.<sup>43</sup> In the words of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan: 'if a well-known character in a popular television series has to confront HIV or AIDS, this can have a dramatic effect on viewers who may not have watched a non-fiction programme about the epidemic'.<sup>44</sup>

Unfortunately, a review of the health communications literature finds little information on how marketing techniques can be leveraged to unpack health edutainment and how health information can be packaged in an engaging and relevant manner. By extension, the marketing literature is silent on how to develop health edutainment for a target audience in order to positively impact their behaviour and effect social change.

Against this background, this paper contends that health edutainment can positively impact multicultural millennials and their health behaviours. Therefore, the following hypotheses are offered:

*H1:* Multicultural Millennials attitude towards a new diet is positively related to intention to try a new diet.

*H2:* Multicultural Millennials perceived behavioural control over trying a new diet is positively associated with intention to try a new diet.

*H3:* Multicultural Millennials subjective norm regarding a diet is positively associated with intention to try a new diet.

*H4:* Millennials self-health identity is negatively related to intention to try a new diet.

*H5:* Health edutainment is more entertaining for multicultural millennials than traditional health programming and traditional entertainment programming.

## METHODOLOGY

### Study 1

#### *Qualitative research*

The depth interview can be described as a type of probing or motivation research.<sup>45</sup> Essentially, it is a process that enables researchers to delve deeper and uncover the motivations, attitudes, feelings, prejudices, experiences and profound understandings of consumers regarding the phenomenon being researched. This method also allows the researcher to uncover richer data because it is rooted in a grounded understanding of the values and beliefs systems of the consumers within the context of a flexible and unstructured format.<sup>46,47</sup> Ideally, within a depth interview setting, the researcher works diligently to enable the consumer to speak freely, without interruption, about the phenomenon being studied.<sup>48</sup>

The sample for the depth interviews used in the present study came from a large northeastern US university and from a mid-sized nonprofit organisation in Harlem, New York. Established in 1993, the nonprofit organisation provides comprehensive services and advocacy for women, families and communities affected by AIDS, while simultaneously providing prevention and education services to their clients and at-risk communities.

To better understand the delicate balance between millennials' actual versus perceived health status and behaviours, ten diverse individuals were interviewed from each organisation (five women and five men, aged 19–28), making 20 in all, in an effort to begin identifying and understanding the mindsets and motivations of those who come from different socio-economic and educational backgrounds.

One-on-one personal interviews with the students at the university were conducted on campus. The interviews at the nonprofit were conducted in a meeting room at their main office in Harlem. The 20 participants received a US\$15 Target gift certificate for their participation.

### *Data analysis and results*

Twenty depth interviews were conducted in order to ground the research in a better understanding of the health status of millennials as well as their relation to storytelling in the media (Appendix A provides details on the participants). Edutainment was used as the entry point to learn and observe their reactions to storytelling in the media that involved health messages.<sup>49,50</sup>

To begin this process, a discussion guide was created and divided into four sections. The first was comprised of questions based on the television clip stimuli viewed by the participants (Appendix B provides an overview of the stimuli). The chosen television programmes — ABC's 'Private Practice', and the nationally syndicated health show, 'The Doctors' — highlighted the health issue of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). 'Private Practice' conveys accurate health information through the use of fictional characters in an episodic dramatic storytelling format; this stimulus is considered relatively non-commercialised because health issues are not directly promoted and there is no direct-to-camera discussion of health issues. By contrast, 'The Doctors' relies on real doctors to convey accurate health information in real-life situations, directly to the camera.

Next, the participants answered health and wellness questions based on their personal network as well as regarding their own health. This strategy was used to continue to strengthen the rapport with the participant as well as get below the surface of their personalities to uncover

their health motivations.<sup>51</sup> Such questions included: 'Who influences your best friend's food choices?'; 'What are the top five health issues that matter most to your best friend right now?'; and 'What is your ideal health?'. The third section focused on the personal media usage questions and included: 'What media do you consume?'; 'What are the top five entertainment programmes you watch?'; 'What device(s) do you typically watch your entertainment programmes on?'; and 'What are the top five health and wellness issues you see regularly portrayed in the media?'. The final section was on basic demographics, which asked the participants their gender, age and ethnicity. Nvivo was the analytical tool used to analyse the data.

The interviews revealed insightful information on the impact of health edutainment, the health behaviours of multicultural millennials, as well as how they imagine their ideal health. It is apparent that multicultural millennials desire to have optimal health and wellness for themselves. However, the reality is that they have not figured out how to achieve it. Therefore, the strongest emergent themes from the data are an enormous longing to be healthy in mind, body and spirit, as well as an openness to seeing authentic and relevant storytelling regarding health issues in the media that is meaningful to multicultural millennials.

From the interviews, it was apparent that the storytelling in the health edutainment stimuli worked because the participants enjoyed and were more involved in the narrative conveyed in 'Private Practice' versus 'The Doctors'. For example, the 'Private Practice' segment told the story of a young boy and his parents who desperately asked their doctor to give them a prescription for ADHD medicine for their son, even though the son did not want the medicine and the doctor felt that the prescription might not have been needed. During the interviews, a male participant shared that he was diagnosed with ADHD as a child and

saw himself and his parents in the 'Private Practice' clip:

'I mean, I remember when I was little, I saw a neurologist and I was on an ADHD medicine for a little while, and I didn't like it and I stopped taking it, and that was it. My parents were OK — if you don't like it, that's the way it is — you're going to study harder though. And, that was it. So, I don't know. I guess if I felt I was being forced to take a medicine I would be extremely put off and would definitely not take it.' (Chris, age 21, university student)

In regard to gender, many of the female participants enjoyed the narrative conveyed in the 'Private Practice' clip and felt that it was informative as well as very relatable and relevant:

'Well, one because I feel like I could relate, because I felt that my son had ADHD, and I really, I kind of diagnosed him myself, and said that, so I was really interested in this topic.' (Tabitha, age 24, nonprofit programme participant)

'This clip was a lot more interactive, interesting, more relatable, and it wasn't — the dialogue between them was just more interesting, or — realistic — right. It was realistic. It wasn't so technically put.' (Tia, age 28, nonprofit programme participant)

There were males that enjoyed the 'Private Practice' clip as well and shared that it was very relatable and relevant:

'It [Private Practice] had more detail, it had more relatable things, like oh, it was something that I might have been through, you know, I could see somebody going through, like a real event.' (Andre, age 21, nonprofit programme participant)

When asked about the top five health issues that matter to them and their friends, the participants were very frank:

'So, health concerns? That's where the concern is right now. People are having sex

more. Even if they're using condoms, they — condoms pop. So that's what people are worried about right now, is the fact that a condom might pop, and I might catch an STI, and got to go talk to the doctor again. It's really — she's right. Like, asthma has come — is going around to everybody. People who didn't have asthma all their lives, turning 24, "Oh, you got asthma now". What? So that is what people are kind of worried about right now.' (Denise, age 19, nonprofit programme participant)

The participants gave very direct answers when asked about how they eat presently:

'It's been about, like, a year and a half. I gave up, like, McDonald's and Burger King and stuff like that. But I can't give up the chicken spot, I can't give up Spanish food. So that's my kryptonite. But, you know, I try not to drink too much juice and soda. So, you know, that way if I have, like, ten chicken wings, I can say, "But I had water".' (Tabitha, age 24, nonprofit programme participant)

I can say, I probably do a little bit more junk than I like, healthy stuff but, you know, I try to balance out. I do. I do. Yeah ... you can eat whatever you want, as long as you keep that body moving. Your body will stay right — you can eat McDonald's, you can eat whatever, just keep moving. (Edward, age 19, nonprofit programme participant)

When asked the question relating to what their ideal or imagined health, the participants definitely long to achieve optimal health:

'When I run up the stairs, not to be out of breath. When I — [laughter] when I fold my knee, I mean, not to crack and hurt. It would be lovely. I would love to have ideal health again. I really would. I would love it. I'm old-young, and it's getting real.' (Denise age 21, nonprofit programme participant)

'I'm still working on that. [laughter] Yeah, I — yeah, I haven't given much thought to my mental health. And, you



know, you just kind of go with the days, and you don't really — well, you just put to the back of your mind whatever it is that's going on.' (Tabitha, age 24, nonprofit programme participant)

Overall, the qualitative work made it possible to observe firsthand that millennials are truly conscious of their health and wellness. They also have a desire to live well. More importantly, they would definitely respond to health messages when they truly see themselves in storytelling that meets them where they are in life. Thus, this research supports Hypothesis 5 that health edutainment is more entertaining for multicultural millennials than traditional health programming and traditional entertainment programming.

## Study 2

### *Health survey*

Building on the qualitative work, the next stage was to investigate millennials' health behaviours and self-identity concerning their diets. To investigate the drivers of intention to change eating habits, data were collected from a sample of 245 undergraduate students who were instructed to consider their current, future and intended eating habits. College students are an appropriate population to investigate this issue of intended diet change and vegetarian diet choices as they represent a group that is making choices that reflect learned eating habits at the same time as they make certain food choice decisions for the first time.<sup>52</sup>

The administered questionnaire was adapted according to a standard, widely used format for TPB.<sup>53</sup> First, subjects described their current diet makeup beliefs in reference to five food categories (meat; dairy and eggs; fruits, vegetables and legumes/beans; starches; nuts and seeds). Respondents were also asked to categorise their diet according to meat-based, balanced, non-meat based, vegetarian and vegan.

Items for constructs were modified using pre-existing scales, previously developed specifically for the TPB.<sup>54</sup> As the theory is well developed, items for perceived behavioural control over trying a new diet, attitude toward trying a new diet, subjective norm for trying a new diet and behavioural intention for adopting a new diet were all adapted to reflect the food and diet context.<sup>55</sup> More specifically, questions for these constructs addressed individuals' attitude toward social interaction and discipline associated with following a specific diet. Subjective norms regarding peer, family and friends' diet were assessed with a four-item scale and captured the extent to which these social reference groups influenced respondents' diet choices. Perceived behavioural control regarding trying a new diet in the future was assessed and measured the extent to which respondents agreed with the following statements: 'In the future, I believe I have a high degree of personal control over eating a new diet and I am very capable of following a different diet in the future'.

Last, self-health identity was assessed with a four-item scale adapted from Povey, Wellens and Connor<sup>56</sup> that measured the extent to which respondents agreed with the following statements: 'I think of myself as: a healthy eater; someone who is concerned about the consequences of what I eat; someone who is concerned with healthy eating; I think my diet is very healthy; I think my diet is very health conscious'.

### *Data analysis and results*

A regression analysis was conducted to test the impact of the three attitudinal, behavioural and normative components as well as self-identity on intention to follow a new diet. Composite scores were created and used for hypothesis testing.

First, attitude had a significant positive impact on intention to try a new diet ( $\beta = 0.183, p = 0.002$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported. Next, Hypothesis 3 states that

subjective norm is positively associated with intention to try a new diet. This variable was operationalised as individuals' perception of their friends, family and peers on their own diet choices. Subjective norm had a positive significant impact on intention to try a new diet ( $\beta = 0.131, p = 0.027$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 3 is supported. Hypothesis 2 argued that perceived behavioural control is positively associated with intention to try a new diet, but was not supported ( $\beta = 0.739, p = 0.460$ ).

Lastly, Hypothesis 4 was supported, indicating that individuals' level of self-health identity was negatively associated with intention to change diet in the future ( $\beta = -4.501, p < 0.000$ ). Overall, the adjusted  $R^2$  for the model was moderate at 29.3 per cent, indicating that the variables explained roughly 30 per cent of the variance in intention to follow a new diet.

## DISCUSSION

Ultimately, the results of this research demonstrate the importance of using socially relevant methods and elements when packaging serious health information targeting multicultural millennials. The findings regarding the association between attitudes, health intentions and behaviours, subjective norm and self-health identity provide significant insights into the drivers of health-oriented diet change and food choice behaviour for millennials. The results shed light on three categories of drivers of healthy diet intentions: cost and access to healthy food, social factors and individuals' self-identity as it pertains to health consciousness. Consequently, the manner in which marketers and advertisers communicate health messaging to multicultural millennials should include elements that are highly relatable, relevant and personalised.

Future research could develop a typology that would serve as a guideline on how to create the right balance of entertainment and education for effective health edutainment. Specifically, in the area of positive affect,

more work is required on the impact of the emotion of empowerment on multicultural millennials. There is a shortage of literature on the impact of empowerment on consumer health attitudes and behaviours. This is surprising in today's society where numerous marketing campaigns are focused on recognising and featuring the individual as one who has the power to make decisions and create one's best life. These campaigns all capture and promote the positive benefits associated with consumer empowerment. Recent work by Füller and colleagues<sup>57</sup> investigates empowerment as it relates to online interactivity and product creation. Findings indicate that when consumers experienced perceived empowerment and enjoyment, they also experienced increased ability to take part in the creation of new product design. Moreover, they felt more competent and believed they could make valuable contributions.<sup>58</sup> These findings raise the question: if empowerment is a possible extension of positive affect, which specific cognitive activities does it affect?

Additional aspects of health edutainment beyond television (eg social media, advergames and mobile advertising) should also be addressed. It is important to examine multicultural millennials as parents and how health edutainment can affect their parenting. Research findings may provide insight beyond examining how multicultural millennials see themselves. Future research should also investigate how multicultural millennials' health self-identity impacts their parenting. Could it be that multicultural millennials raise their children in a health environment that mimics their own upbringing? Similarly, future work should investigate whether health edutainment makes them contemplate or even question their own health upbringing.

## MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study are useful for marketing practitioners in advertising, public

relations, digital and branded entertainment. This work will assist advertising agencies and content producers alike in serving as a guide in the creation of effective health messaging and advertisements, especially for preventable diseases (eg obesity, hypertension, diabetes). Moreover, this work supports the typical industry practice of telling stories in advertisements and transferring that knowledge to health messages in lieu of producing messages that evoke fear or negative emotion from an audience.

For public relations professionals, this work serves as a recipe for producing media-related press events and/or cause-related promotional campaign launches. So often, public relations professionals focus solely on

delivering accurate information to media and their various publics. Often, they fail to realise that this information should be pre-digested for audiences who are not topic experts. This kind of assistance needs to be delivered in a relevant manner that is respectful to the audience and not ‘dumbed down’.

In addition, health edutainment may be appropriate for other serious issues affecting multicultural millennials, like gun violence, bullying or the #MeToo movement. Ultimately, the key to making a difference in the lives of multicultural millennials and their health, both now and into the future, may be achieving the right balance of educating *and* entertaining them.<sup>59</sup>

## APPENDIX A: INFORMANTS FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Pseudonym	Race/gender	Age (years)	Identifier
Karen	Caucasian female	20	Student
Maria	Latino female	21	Student
Asia	Asian female	20	Student
Shawna	African American female	21	Student
Yvonne	Caucasian female	21	Student
Chris	Caucasian male	21	Student
Juan	Latino male	20	Student
Sidney	African American male	21	Student
Robert	Caucasian male	21	Student
John	Caucasian male	22	Student
Dave	African American male	19	Nonprofit programme participant
Tony	African American male	19	Nonprofit programme participant
Ace	African American male	19	Nonprofit programme participant
Edward	African American male	19	Nonprofit programme participant
Andre	African American male	21	Nonprofit programme participant
Franny	African American female	24	Nonprofit programme participant
Tracey	African American female	24	Nonprofit programme participant
Tia	African American female	28	Nonprofit programme participant
Denise	Latino female	19	Nonprofit programme participant
Tabitha	African American female	24	Nonprofit programme participant

## APPENDIX B: OVERVIEW OF TELEVISION CLIP STIMULI USED

*Private Practice*: This clip of four minutes and 33 seconds in length tells the story of a young boy whose parents are medicating him because they believe he may have ADHD. The lead doctor in the clip educates the parents as to what makes a child a suitable candidate for ADHD medication. The clip also shows the cast of male doctors discussing the positive and negative trends of ADHD.

*The Doctors*: This clip of four minutes and 33 seconds in length focused on the subject of ADHD. Real doctors deliver a health message/information to a studio audience on what to look for in children who may have ADHD. It also discusses the positive and negative trends of ADHD. The clip follows a documentary format with four to five credible medical/health experts delivering the information.

## REFERENCES

1. Tanenhaus, S. (2014) 'The millennials are generation nice', *New York Times*, 17th August, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/17/fashion/the-millennials-are-generation-nice.html> (accessed 15th November, 2015).
2. Strauss, W., Howe, N. and Markiewicz, P.G. (2006) 'Millennials and the Pop Culture: Strategies for a New Generation of Consumers in Music, Movies, Television, the Internet, and Video Games', LifeCourse Associates, Great Falls, VA.
3. Kiersz, A. (2014) '15 facts about millennials and the economy that everyone in business should know', available at: <http://www.businessinsider.com/millennial-facts-2014-5> (accessed 19th May, 2014).
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Anderson, J.Q. and Rainie, L. (2012) 'Millennials will Benefit and Suffer due to their Hyperconnected Lives', Pew Research Center, available at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2012/02/29/millennials-will-benefit-and-suffer-due-to-theirhyperconnected-lives/> (accessed 27th January, 2014).
7. The Nielsen Company (2013) 'The State of the African American Consumer', available at: <https://www.iab.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Nielsen-African-American-Consumer-Report-Sept-2013.pdf> (accessed 27th January, 2014).
8. The Nielsen Company (2011) 'The State of the African American Consumer', available at: <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/report/2011/state-of-the-african-american-consumer/> (accessed 27th January, 2014).
9. The Nielsen Company (2012) 'The State of the Hispanic Consumer', 1–20, available at: <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/reports/2012/state-of-the-hispanic-consumer-the-hispanic-market-imperative.html> (accessed 27th January, 2014).
10. *Ibid.*
11. Seiders, K. and Petty, R. D. (2004) 'Obesity and the role of food marketing: a policy analysis of issues and remedies', *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 153–169.
12. Block, L. G., Grier, S. A., Childers, T. L., Davis, B., Ebert, J. E., Kumanyika, S., Laczniak, R.N., Machin, J.E., Motley, C.M., Peracchio, L. and Pettigrew S. (2011) 'From nutrients to nurturance: A conceptual introduction to food wellbeing', *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 5–13.
13. Wymer, W. (2011) 'Developing more effective social marketing strategies', *Journal of Social Marketing*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 17–31.
14. Block *et al.*, ref, 12 above.
15. Lindeman, M. and Sirelius, M. (2001) 'Food choice ideologies: the modern manifestations of normative and humanist views of the world. *Appetite*, Vol. 37, No. 3, pp. 175–184.
16. Ajzen, I. and Fishbein, M. (1980) 'Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behaviour', Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
17. Armitage, C. J. and Conner, M. (2001) 'Efficacy of the theory of planned behaviour: a meta-analytic review. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 40, No. 4, pp. 471–499.
18. Godin, G. and Kok, G. (1996) 'The theory of planned behavior: a review of its applications to health-related behaviors. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 87–98.
19. Sheeran P. and Taylor S. (1999) 'Predicting intentions to use condoms: a meta-analysis and comparison of the theories of reasoned action and planned behavior', *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 29, No. 8, pp. 1624–1675.
20. Biddle, B. J., Bank, B. J. and Slavings, R. L. (1987) 'Norms, preferences, identities and retention decisions', *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 322–337.
21. Charng, H. W., Piliavin, J. A. and Callero, P. L. (1988) 'Role identity and reasoned action in the prediction of repeated behavior', *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No. 4, pp. 303–317.
22. Debevec, K. and Romeo, J. B. (1992) 'Self-referent processing in perceptions of verbal and visual commercial information', *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 83–102.
23. Escalas, J. E. (2007) 'Self-referencing and persuasion: narrative transportation versus analytical elaboration',

- Journal of Consumer Research*, 33 (March), pp. 421–429.
24. Burnkrant R.E. and Unnava H.R. (1995) 'Effects of self-referencing on persuasion', *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 17–26.
  25. *Ibid.*
  26. Brewer, W.F. (1994) 'Autobiographical memory and survey research', in 'Autobiographical Memory and the Validity of Retrospective Reports', Springer, New York, NY, pp. 11–20.
  27. Babin, L.A. and Burns, A.C. (1997) 'Effects of print ad pictures and copy containing instructions to imagine on mental imagery that mediates attitudes', *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 33–44.
  28. Welbourne, J.L., Hartley, T.A., Ott, S.D. and Robertson, S. (2008) 'Effects of risk-focused and recommendation-focused mental imagery on occupational risk communication', *Health Communication*, Vol. 23, No. 5, pp. 473–482.
  29. *Ibid.*
  30. Gregory, W.L., Cialdini, R.B. and Carpenter, K.M. (1982) 'Self-relevant scenarios as mediators of likelihood estimates and compliance: does imagining make it so?', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 43, No. 1, p. 89–99
  31. Ashby, F.G. and Isen, A.M. (1999) 'A neuropsychological theory of positive affect and its influence on cognition', *Psychological Review*, Vol. 106, No. 3, pp. 529–550.
  32. *Ibid.*
  33. Holbrook, M. B. and Hirschman, E.C. (1982) 'The experiential aspects of consumption: consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun', *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 132–140.
  34. Oransky, I. (2004) 'From narratives of illness to "edutainment"', *Lancet*, Vol. 364, No. 9442, pp. 1305–1306.
  35. Singhal, A. and Rogers, E. (2012) 'Entertainment-Education: A Communication Strategy for Social Change', Routledge, Abingdon.
  36. Pechmann, C. and Wang, L. (2010) 'Effects of indirectly and directly competing reference group messages and persuasion knowledge: Implications for educational placements'. *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 47, No. 1, pp. 134–145.
  37. MacInnis, D.J. and Price, L.L. (1987) 'The role of imagery in information processing: review and extensions', *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 473–491.
  38. Bone, P.F. and Ellen, P.S. (1992) 'The generation and consequences of communication-evoked imagery', *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 93–104.
  39. *Ibid.*
  40. *Ibid.*
  41. *Ibid.*
  42. Deighton, J., Romer, D. and McQueen, J. (1989) 'Using drama to persuade', *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 335–343.
  43. Oransky, ref. 34 above.
  44. *Ibid.*
  45. Woodward, J. L., Hofler, D., Haviland, F., Hyman, H., Peterman, J. and Rosten, H. (1950) 'Depth interviewing', *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 14, No. 5, pp. 721–724.
  46. Berent, P. H. (1966) 'The depth interview', *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 6, No. 99, pp. 32–39.
  47. Braybrooke, D. (ed.) (1965) 'Philosophical Problems of the Social Sciences', Macmillan, London.
  48. *Ibid.*
  49. Pechmann and Wang, ref. 36 above.
  50. Singhal and Rogers, ref. 35 above.
  51. Woodward *et al.*, ref. 45 above.
  52. Lindeman and Sirelius, ref. 15 above.
  53. Ajzen I. (1991) 'The theory of planned behavior', *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp. 179–211.
  54. *Ibid.*
  55. *Ibid.*
  56. Povey, R., Wellens, B. and Conner, M. (2001) 'Attitudes towards following meat, vegetarian and vegan diets: an examination of the role of ambivalence', *Appetite*, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp. 15–26.
  57. Füller, J., H. Mühlbacher, K. Matzler, and G. Jawecki (2009) 'Consumer empowerment through internet-based co-creation', *Journal of Management Information Systems*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 71–102.
  58. *Ibid.*
  59. Lindsey-Warren, T. M. (2017) 'Entertainment for the Mind, Body and Spirit', in 'Entertainment Values', Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 59–69.