

I Z I I S

LIFE
BETWEEN
THE







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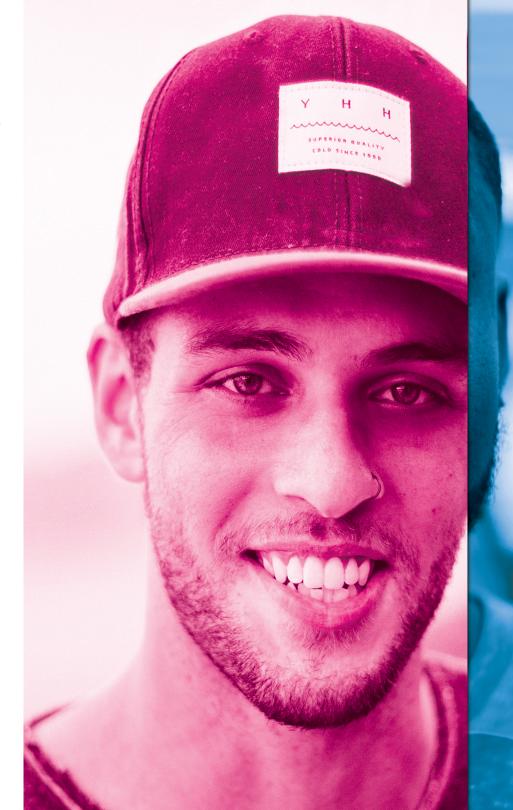
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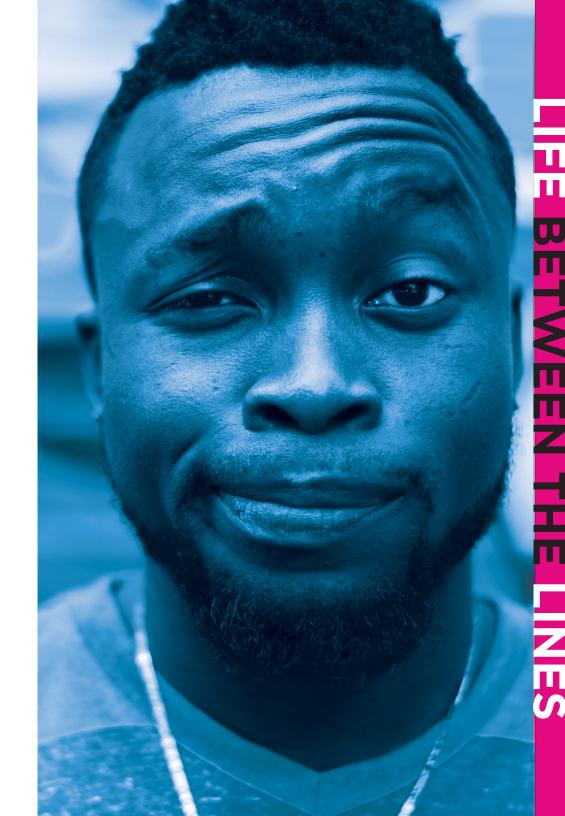
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WHAT IS MOJO AD?

MOJO Ad is a full-service, student-staffed advertising agency at the Missouri School of Journalism. We are specialists in all things young. More specifically, we are specialists in the lifestyles and habits of 18- to 24-year-olds, or, as we call them, the Youth and Young Adult (YAYA™) market.

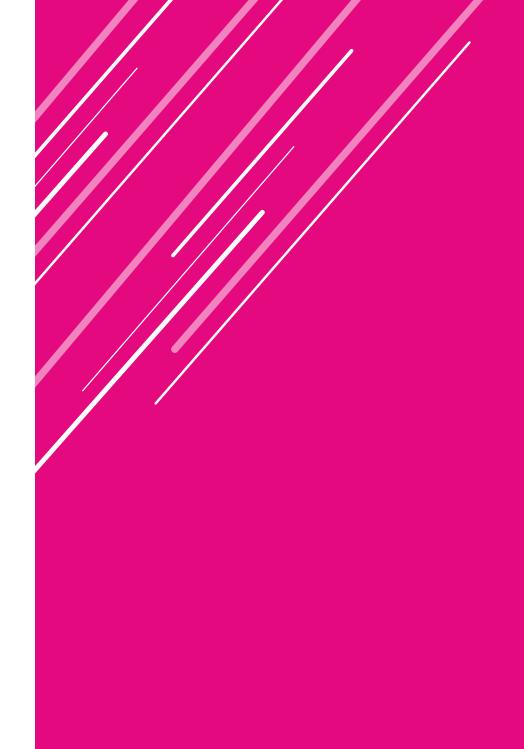
This market is complex, ever-changing and difficult to predict. Fortunately, we are the YAYA market. We grew up with them, we've belly laughed with them, and we've figured out how they tick.

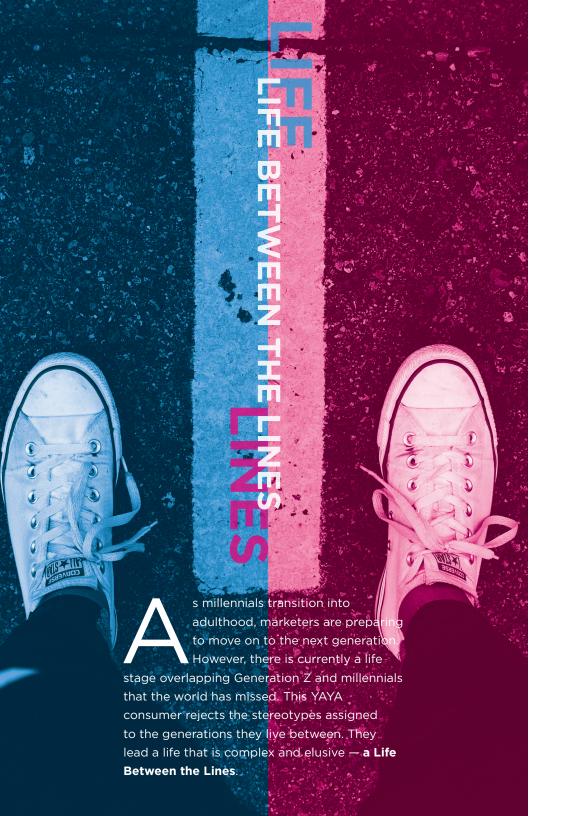


WHAT IS THE STATE OF THE YAYA?

The State of the YAYA is an annual in-depth report compiled and written by the MOJO Ad staff based on our national quantitative study. Each year, we help marketers understand and connect with the YAYA consumer. This report not only sheds light on who they are but also highlights their attitudes and behaviors on everything from snacking and substances to news and education.

The YAYA demographic is a life stage, not a generation, and it is often overlooked by marketers. The YAYA population is 31 million strong in the United States and commands \$82.4 billion in buying power.^{1,2} They are about to decide whether to stick with the brands they have used their entire life or try something new. If marketers fail to identify them, they could lose them forever.





BETWEEN DREAMS AND REALITY

YAYA consumers approach their futures with a degree of pragmatism. But being realistic doesn't keep them from being dreamers. They remain confident as they anticipate the difficulty of succeeding in the professional world.

For example, 71 percent of this demographic think that it's hard to get a good job nowadays. However, 61 percent are confident that they will land their dream job in the next five years. Similar to Gen Z, which prioritizes personal success more than millennials,³ these consumers are driven to find personal fulfillment.

Once they reach financial security, YAYA consumers believe they are ready to make their dreams a reality. While research shows that a majority of the YAYA market values owning a home

someday over traveling,⁴ they still yearn to backpack through Europe once they know it won't break the bank.

BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION AND LOWER DEBT

One way the YAYA life stage establishes security is through education. Our research found that 60 percent say they will go to school because it is "part of the plan."⁵

But with one look at their first tuition bill, their pragmatism could make them contemplate whether college is a worthwhile investment.

PRAGMATIC DOESN'T KEEP ME FROM BEING A DREAMER YAYA consumers are starting to see college as a hoop they have to jump through to pursue their true passions despite being the most educated demographic.

Currently, 10.7 million in this life stage have attended some college and 2.9 million have earned a bachelor's degree.⁶

It's no secret that young adults are facing a student loan epidemic. In fact, 56 percent of the YAYA demographic believes that college is a risky investment. American students owe more than \$1 trillion in student loan debt, which is \$620 billion more than the entire U.S. credit card debt.⁷

While attending a university can cause sticker shock, cost isn't the only aspect YAYA students are beginning to question.
Only 8 percent believe that a traditional classroom education is more valuable than real-world experience.

Despite their lack of confidence in textbooks and theories, today's young adults aren't ready to remove higher ed from their life plans. As they try to make time for those invaluable experiences, online college has become a more acceptable way to get degrees. Sixty-three percent agree that online classes and degrees are a great way to save money.

No matter the source, a degree legitimizes and sets the YAYA consumer up for future success.

Over half agree that an online college degree is as good as a traditional college degree.

COLLEGE IS A HOOP I HAVE TO JUMP THROUGH TO PURSUE MY TRUE PASSIONS.

BETWEEN STRESS AND STIMULANTS

One way YAYA consumers attempt to deal with the tensions that come with higher education and other aspects of their lives is through substances. This life stage believes that the stress is constant, but their risky coping methods are just temporary.

Members of the YAYA demographic say they typically deal with stress by using substances or sleeping. These are ways YAYA consumers try to clear their minds and take a break from reality. In fact, 45 percent of those we surveyed agreed that marijuana helps to cope with stress.

When they are real with themselves, these 18- to 24-year-olds worry about the dangers of addictions. Over half of the YAYA demographic worries about developing an addiction to stimulant prescription drugs, anxiety and pain relief prescription drugs, and chewing tobacco.

At the end of the day, those in this life stage understand that while stress will be a consistent element throughout life, they'll eventually leave these risky coping methods behind as they move into their late 20s and beyond.

BUT MY RISKY COPING METHODS ARE JUST TEMPORARY

BETWEEN FACT AND FICTION

The YAYA market's stress is amplified by pervasive advertisements. Whether they are scrolling through their Facebook feeds or tapping through Snapchat stories, they cannot escape a barrage of promoted posts and banner ads. We found that 52 percent of the YAYA demographic thinks advertising is untruthful.8

Individuals in this life stage hold a degree of skepticism when it comes to celebrity endorsements in advertising.

Just because Justin Bieber is dancing across their laptop screens doesn't mean they'll buy the product he endorses.

In fact, 44 percent of the YAYA

demographic would question if a celebrity really favors a brand or if it's only about the money.

Today's YAYA consumer is also skeptical of the news. We found that 45 percent of them agree they consume less news because of the current political climate, and 56 percent of them don't agree that most information in the news is accurate. In fact, we found 45 percent of them prefer when news offers an opinion.

We also found that 58 percent of the YAYA demographic prefers news that is presented in an entertaining manner. The heated political climate has pushed YAYA skeptics away from hard news, such as Wolf Blitzer, and toward entertaining news commentary, such as Trevor Noah.

Even with their skepticism, staying up-to-date with the news is still important to the YAYA population. Our research shows that 63 percent of this demographic feels more confident when they're informed about current events. Watching a comedian like John Oliver crack jokes about the news spares them from divisive, political tension while still allowing them to talk about current events with their friends and family. When discussing the news, humor makes it easier to bridge the divide.

gender equality, race relations and religion.

Although they are receptive to progressive social shifts in culture outside their own personal lives, they tend to put traditional constraints on themselves. Their values may be rooted in old paradigms, but they consider themselves "new traditionalists."

BETWEEN TOLERANCE AND TRADITION

While the YAYA demographic may feel they are currently walking on eggshells when it comes to politics, they are also wary of tension that surrounds polarizing issues including

WITH NEWS, HUMOR BRIDGES THE DIVIDE SO THAT I DON'T HAVE TO

As new traditionalists, YAYA consumers aren't totally ready to move away from customary arrangements for parenting and child-rearing, but they often find these values conflicting with their desire for economic success. To this end, 63 percent of YAYA consumers agree that both parents need to work in families to make ends meet. yet half of our respondents also believed that it was more important to have a stay-athome parent when raising children.

Similarly, YAYA consumers blend the modern emphasis on gender equality with traditional ideas regarding gender roles. Our research found that 77 percent believe that gender equality is important. However, when it comes to mowing the lawn or cooking meals, 40 percent still agree traditional gender roles are helpful in the home.

While they are not averse to traditional home life, the perspective differs when it comes to the workforce. YAYA workers respond positively to portrayals of equality and empowerment, and 63 percent believe that gender is irrelevant in the workplace.

When in the public eye, one of the more divisive topics this population encounters is race relations. We found that 61 percent of 18- to 24-year-old African Americans feel threatened because of their race. Research also shows that 78 percent of the youths in America

MY VALUES ARE
ROOTED IN OLD
PARADIGMS, BUT I'M A
NEW TRADITIONALIST

are concerned with the current state of race relations.⁹

Despite YAYA consumers' concern for social issues, many are hesitant to make their views public. Fiftynine percent of this population stated that they avoid posting their opinions on social media for fear of offending their friends and family.⁸

BETWEEN MORSELS AND MEALS

One thing this demographic does talk about openly is food. They agree that a late afternoon bite to eat is more than just a functional decision, it may also provide a sense of comfort in their demanding lives.

We believe that YAYA consumers' association with snacking for comfort stems from their childhood experiences. Growing up in the midst of the "snack-pack generation," their parents regularly offered them a Go-Gurt

or Fruit Roll-Up after a tough day at grade school. They might celebrate a little league win with an ice cream cone from their local creamery, not a special dinner made just for them.

While YAYA foodies think they have the time to create their own culinary masterpieces, their actions show otherwise. We found that 64 percent believe they have time to sit down for a full meal, but half agrees that they opt for grabbing a quick snack, such as a Clif Bar®, instead.



To be healthier, the YAYA population might need to give up late-night trips to the Taco Bell drive-thru for their fourth meal. Research supports this idea as 49 percent of this demographic agrees that eating healthy requires sacrifice.¹⁰

Some don't want to deal with sacrifice, though. We found that 49 percent of this population doesn't care what people think about the foods they eat. If they can save money eating value meals, such as the Wendy's 4 for \$4, they will do so without fear of judgement.

BETWEEN WANDERLUST AND DOMESTICITY

Even though most YAYA consumers aren't homeowners just yet, it doesn't stop them from adopting a home improvement mindset. Our data showed that 52 percent of the YAYA demographic feels constrained by their rental contracts. Because of this, they do everything in their power to customize their living spaces to reflect their unique personalities.

While they are cooped up in their apartments, YAYA consumers are still dreaming about fixing up their own place in a quaint neighborhood.

According to our findings, 63 percent of them agree the most important factor when choosing where to live is the neighborhood in which the home is located.

The YAYA market dreams of making meals in their own kitchen someday, but they aren't homebodies. They set out regularly to explore the world. This adventure could take them anywhere from the Swiss Alps to the quirky museum in a neighboring state. With a little



help from their parents, and a dip into their savings accounts, the YAYA adventurer looks to set sail for a voyage into a world they intend to explore.

YAYA travelers dream of being immersed in new cultures, but believe their vacation experiences wouldn't be half as fun if they weren't shared. We found that 47 percent of the YAYA demographic agrees a vacation isn't worth taking if they can't take pictures of the places they visit. Did they really go to Machu Picchu if they didn't post it on their social profiles?

LIFE BETWEEN THE LINES

This complex demographic searches for entertainment in everything but also values being informed with credible information. They are constantly stressed, seeking comfort in snacks and substances. They value tradition, but recognize that the world is changing rapidly.

No matter where their journey takes them, the YAYA life stage is constantly being pulled to either side of the generational spectrum. Marketing to this demographic can be a daunting task, and the wrong assumptions can result in a disconnect with your brand.

When marketers look at the world through a generational lens, they must not ignore this unique life stage with significant influence. Immerse yourself in this data, peer beyond the generational divide, and uncover Life Between the Lines.



METHODOLOGY

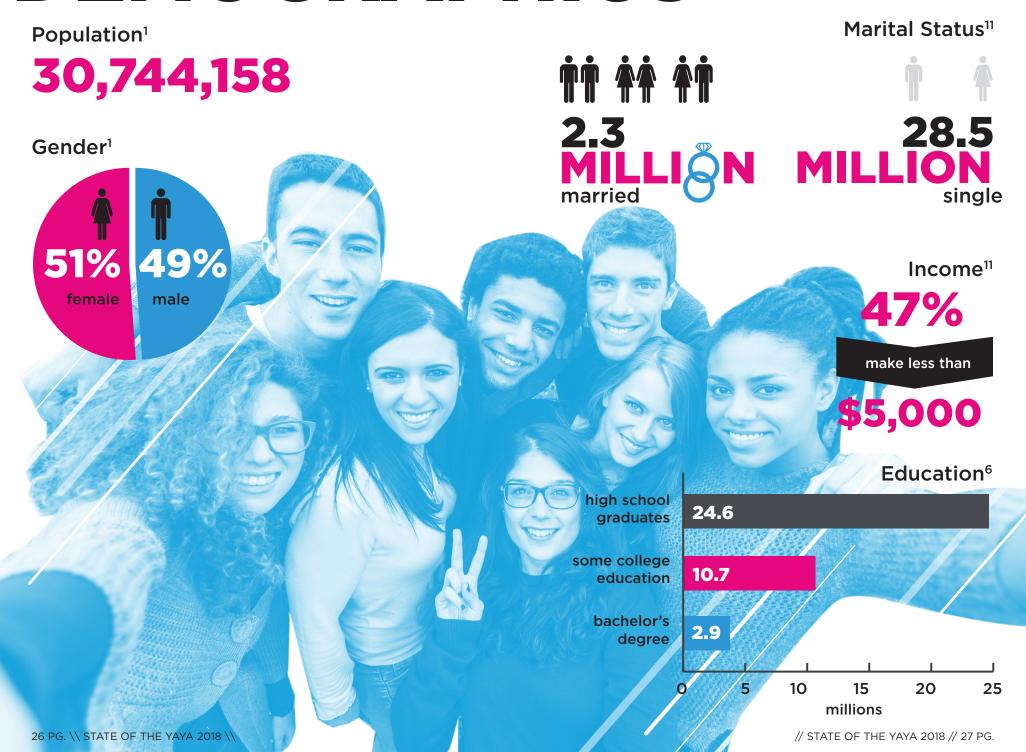
The MOJO Ad staff designed a comprehensive survey to explore the lifestyles, attitudes and beliefs unique to 18- to 24-year olds.

We worked with Qualtrics to distribute our 25-minute survey to their national respondent panel that resulted in 721 complete responses from YAYA consumers. The sample was weighted to match current U.S. Census Bureau data for age, race and gender.

In addition to our primary research, we utilized secondary research, including comparisons to past State of the YAYA reports, to gain insight into the changing YAYA market.

As you can imagine, all the data we obtained can't be fit into one narrative. In the remainder of this book, you will find additional details we found from the 2018 State of the YAYA survey.

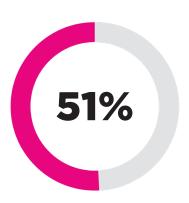
DEMOGRAPHICS



EDUCATION

††††† 3 out of 5

YAYA consumers think that college is worth the money.



Over half of YAYA consumers agree that going to college is a good option if you don't know what else to do.

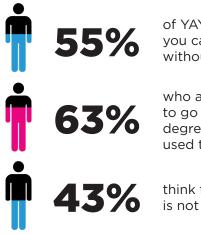
Sixty-one percent believe a college degree is necessary for a successful career.



Online Education

agree that online classes/degrees are a great way to save money.

agree that an online college degree is as good as a traditional college degree.

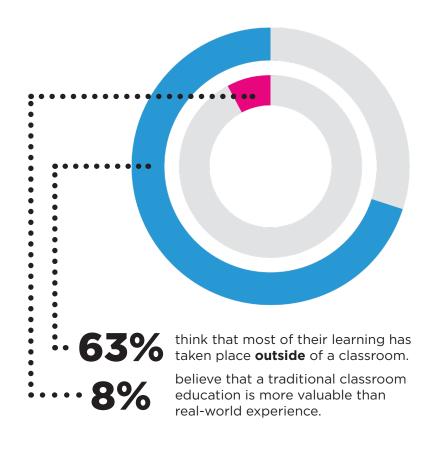


of YAYA consumers think that you can still succeed in life without going to college.

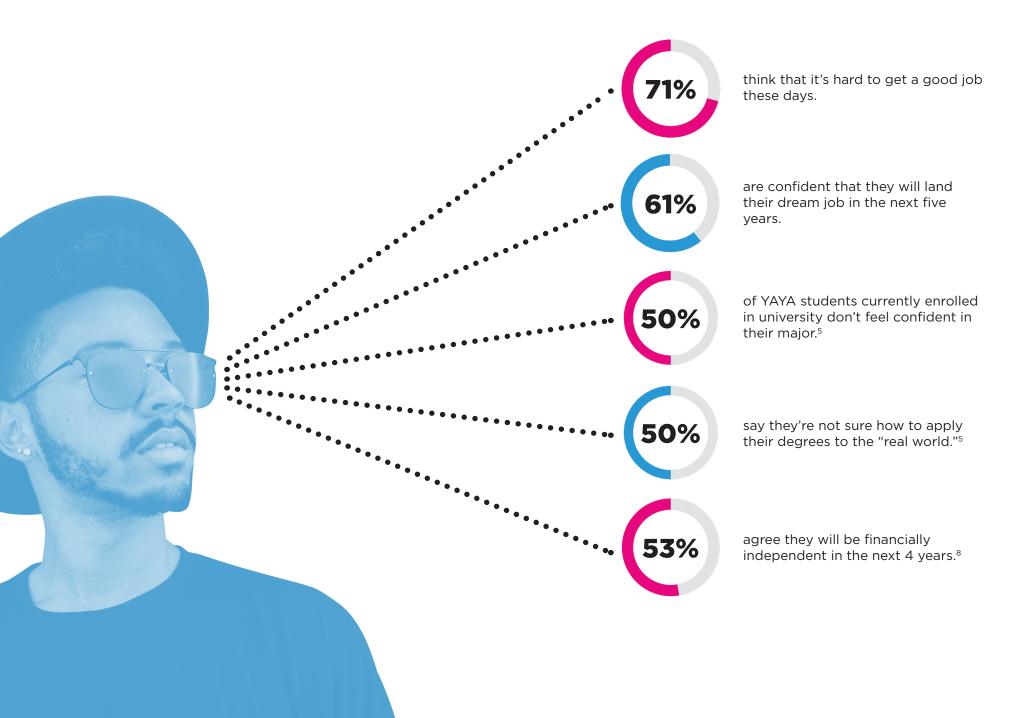
who are in school or have plans to go think that a bachelor's

who are in school or have plans to go think that a bachelor's degree is **less valuable** than it used to be.⁵

think that a college education is not worth going into debt.



EDUCATION



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ADVERTISING & BRANDS

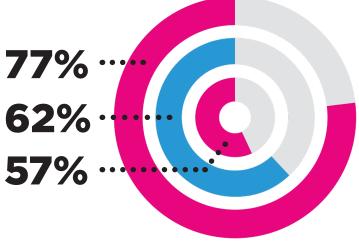
A majority of YAYA consumers agree with the following:

"Brands pretend to care about social issues so that I will buy from them." (60 percent)

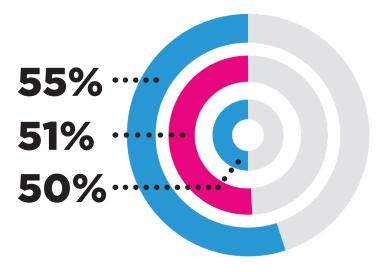
"I like to support brands who provide me with helpful information." (73 percent)

"I prefer ads to show people of different races and cultures." (70 percent)





Compared to other groups, African Americans (77 percent) **like when brands take a stand on social issues**, followed by Latinos (62 percent) and whites (57 percent).



YAYA consumers don't mind seeing ads on their social media feeds if they are "entertaining" (55 percent), "short in length" (51 percent) and "don't interrupt the content I'm looking for" (50 percent).

ADVERTISING & BRANDS

INFLUENCERS

Are influencers worth it?

\$25,000·····\$50,000

In 2016, most marketers spent between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per influencer marketing program. Those figures are projected to double in 2017.¹²

When YAYA consumers see celebrity endorsements of a brand or service on social media:



would question if the celebrity is just endorsing the brand for money.



would question if the post is legitimate.



would be turned off by whatever a celebrity is endorsing.

YAYA consumers think advertising:

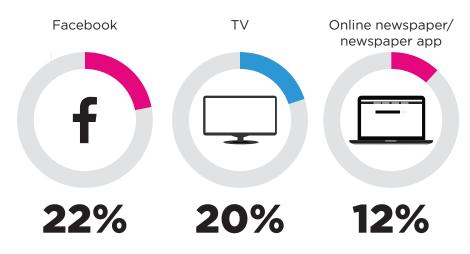




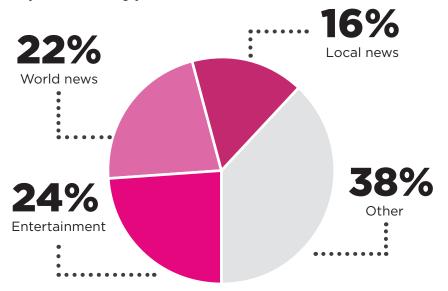
NEWS & POLITICS

EXTRA! EXTRA!

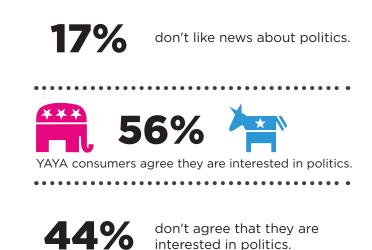
Top News Sources



Top Three Types of News Stories



Interest in Politics



agree that they feel more confident when they keep up with current news.

of YAYA consumers prefer news that's presented in an entertaining manner.



NEWS & POLITICS

18%

of YAYA consumers paid for news in 2017, compared to just 4 percent in 2016.13

45%

agree that they **consume less** news than they used to because of the political climate.



agree that they care more about the news because of the political climate, while roughly a third (30%) disagree.



agree that most information in the news is accurate.



would pay for news if they knew it wasn't fake.











Almost 1 in 5 YAYA consumers uses "fake news" in a joking manner to poke fun at a situation, rather than use the traditional definition.

About half use the term to describe source or story that is not accurate. About half use the term to describe a news



Roughly four in 10 agree that the term "fake news" has cultural meaning.

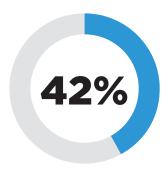
of YAYA consumers agree they would **not** purchase products/services from companies whose social and/or political views don't align with their own.8



RACIAL CLIMATE



MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE



agree that they feel optimistic about the future of race relations in America.



of YAYA consumers agree they feel highly optimistic about the future of the country.

The world would be better if...

"People disregarded politics and religion and treated everyone with compassion."

"People would set aside their views and desires to try to understand other peoples' perspectives."

"So many people didn't think that others need to fail in order for them to succeed."

"Nowadays, people are so politically correct that they judge someone if they say a phrase wrong, instead of attempting to interpret what they're trying to say. They judge the surface of statements instead of understanding the intent of a statement."

"People were more willing to accept differences between people, and people were more willing to look past those differences to come to diplomatic solutions."

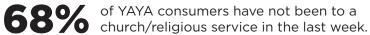
"Humans would realize that all life matters no matter how small. Humans are all part of the same species; gender, race, beliefs and opinions shouldn't matter." "People didn't hide behind their ignorance and were willing to see things differently."

"Everybody was able to look at other people's points of view without getting offended."



RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

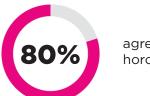
People ages 18-24 are entering adulthood with high levels of religious disaffiliation — $\bf 36$ percent were unaffiliated in 2015.16



For those aged 18-29, 20 percent said they were spiritual but not religious in 2012. This grew to 29 percent in 2017.¹⁷

of incoming U.S. college students are religiously unaffiliated.¹⁸

ASTROLOGY



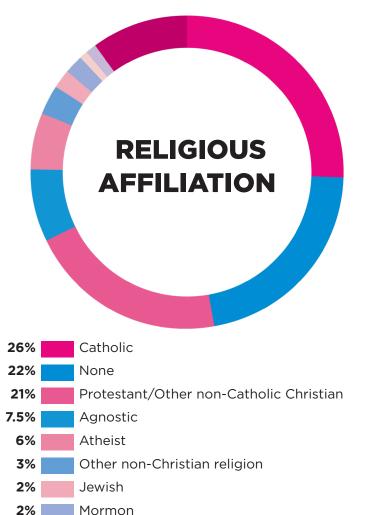
agree it's fun to read their horoscope.



see astrology as scientific, and the amount of believers rose 13 percent in the past two years.¹⁹



1 in 5 YAYA consumers agrees astrology is an important part of their life.



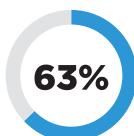
10%

Muslim Hindu

Other

FAMILY

MARRIAGE



agree that both parents need to work in families today to make ends meet.



agree that marriage is a representation of maturity and adulthood.



agree that friends are a part of our family, with **30%** strongly agreeing.



think that marriage is an outdated, unnecessary custom.



agree it's important to have a stay-at-home parent in a home with young children.



of people ages 18-24 say their reason for not being married is because "I'm concentrated on improving myself."²⁰



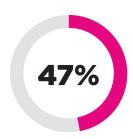
46 PG. \\ STATE OF THE YAYA 2018 \\

do not feel that older generations value and respect people their age.

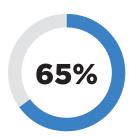


// STATE OF THE YAYA 2018 // 47 PG.

ROMANCE



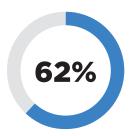
agree their religious beliefs affect the people they involve themselves with romantically.



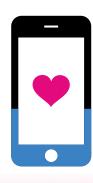
say they would go on a date with someone who has different religious and spiritual beliefs from their own.



agree their political beliefs affect the people they involve themselves with romantically.



plan to live with a romantic partner before they are married.



40%

of YAYA consumers do not feel safe using a dating app like Tinder to meet new people.

The share of 18- to 24-year-olds who use online dating has almost tripled in recent years, from 10 percent in 2013 to 27 percent in 2015, according to Pew.²¹



GENDER ROLES



of males aged 14-24 felt women's gains had come at the expense of men.²²



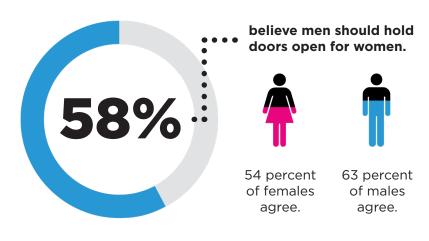
believe gender equality is important.

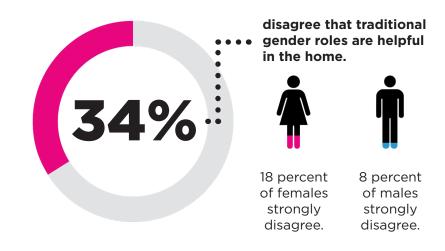


agree that gender is irrelevant in the workplace.



agree gendered products are old-fashioned.





TRAVEL

VACATION PLANNING

77%

did online research when planning a vacation in the past 12 months.²³

45%

of YAYA travelers use social media when researching their travel plans.²³



58%

agree that they need at least a month to plan a vacation.

64%

like to travel with others to split the cost.

FREQUENCY

70%

of YAYA consumers have taken at least one out-of-state vacation in the last 12 months.



A third of YAYA consumers have taken at least one vacation outside of the United States in the last 12 months.

TRAVEL ACTIVITIES



of YAYA consumers prefer to eat, drink and play at local establishments when on vacation.



of YAYA consumers ranked eating local cuisine as something that was very important when they traveled.²³



of YAYA consumers agree that internet access is essential in a vacation destination.



wouldn't take a vacation without technology.



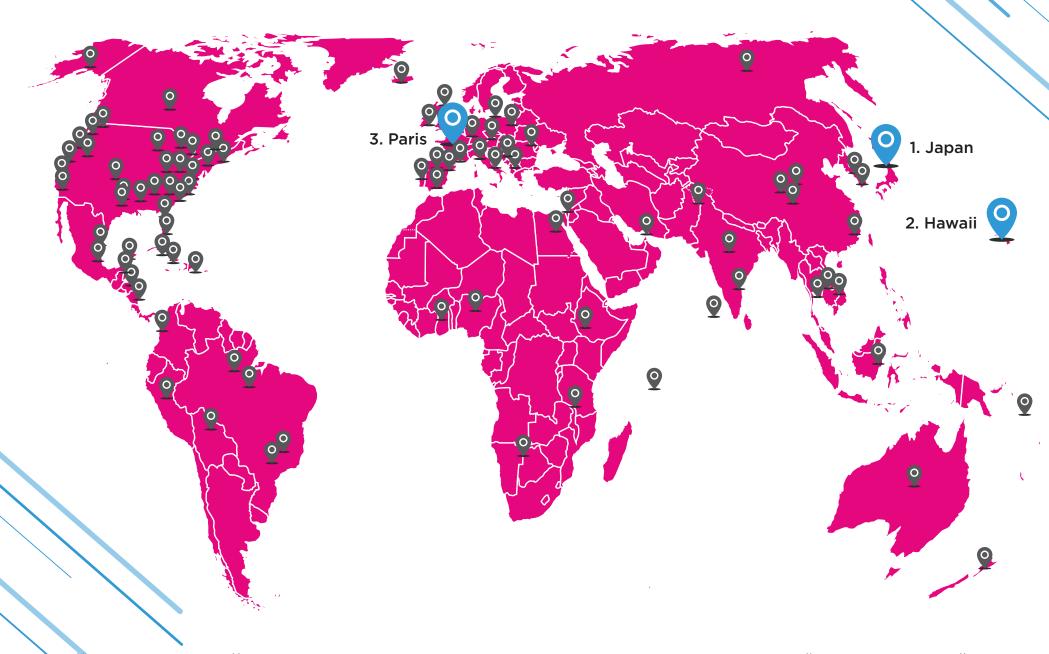
of YAYA consumers agree a vacation isn't worth taking if they can't take photos.



of YAYA travelers believe that homeshare sites like Airbnb provide a better local experience when traveling than hotels.²³

TRAVEL

If YAYA travelers could vacation anywhere in the world, where would they go?



54 PG. \\ STATE OF THE YAYA 2018 \\

SNACKING



of respondents reported always being hungry.



of YAYA consumers believe they still have time to sit down for a meal.



of respondents agree that they often snack instead of eating full meals.



don't care what people think about the foods they eat.

Reasons for Snacking



of respondents agree snacking helps them get through the day.



67%

of YAYA consumers snack when they are bored.



68%

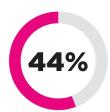
of YAYA consumers snack to hold them over in between meals.



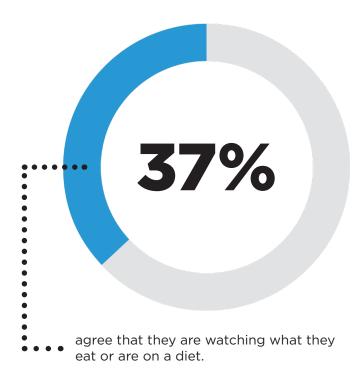
3/5

Surprisingly, 61 percent of YAYA consumers would rather cook their own food than have more free time.

HEALTHY EATING



of respondents prefer restaurants that list calories/nutrition information on their menus.



ALL-NATURAL

Women aged 18-24 are more likely to use natural brands than the average consumer.²⁷



of YAYA consumers agree they purchase all-natural products because they make them feel healthier.



care more about their health than the way people see them.



agree that buying all-natural products makes them feel better about themselves.



of 18- to 24-year-olds agree that living a healthy lifestyle requires sacrifices.²⁴



agree it's too expensive to eat healthy foods.8

SUBSTANCES



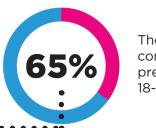
YAYA consumers currently use the following recreationally:

75% 37% 16% 11% 8% 7%

According to the National Commission on the Abuse of Drugs, Alcohol and Other Dependencies,

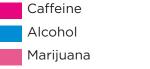
64% of YAYA students binge drink.²⁵

binge drink weekly.²⁵



The majority (65 percent) of YAYA consumers who use anxiety and pain relief prescriptions recreationally are 18- to 21-year-olds.

YAYA consumers believe they use marijuana, e-cigarettes, pain relief and anxiety drugs, and even caffeine more than their parent's generation.



Tobacco cigarettes

E-Cigarettes

Anxiety and pain relief drugs

Stimulant prescription drugs

Chewing tobacco

3%

3%

of 18- to 24-year-old college students use cannabis as of 2017.²⁵









E-Cigarettes Pain Relief/Anxiety Drugs

Caffeine

51%

aren't comfortable drinking alone at a bar.

are comfortable not drinking at a party when their friends are drinking.

SUBSTANCES



agree alcohol helps cope with stress.

45% agree that marijuana helps cope with stress.

YAYA consumers' two primary stressors:





Work/school

Finances

YAYA consumers also stress over the following:



32%



Health

Weight

Parents

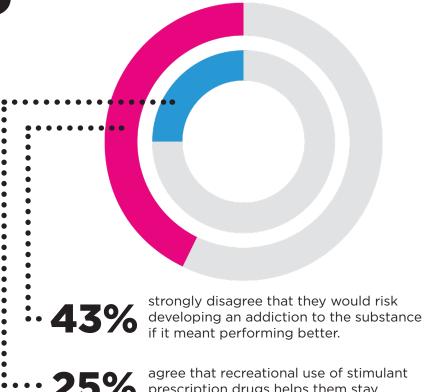




Relationship issues

Socializing

Friendships



prescription drugs helps them stay productive.



YAYA consumers agree that alcohol (58 percent), caffeine (53 percent) and marijuana (36 percent) help them stay social.

of respondents agree that alcohol helps them sleep.

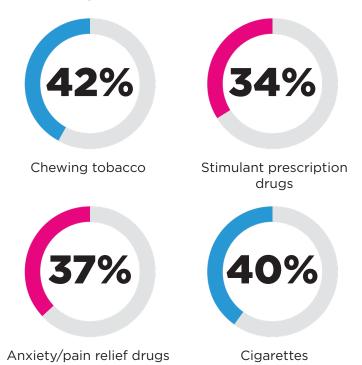
of responde them sleep.

of respondents agree marijuana helps

of YAYA consumers would risk developing an addiction to caffeine if it would help them perform better.

CONSEQUENCES

YAYA consumers believe their peers look down on each other for using:



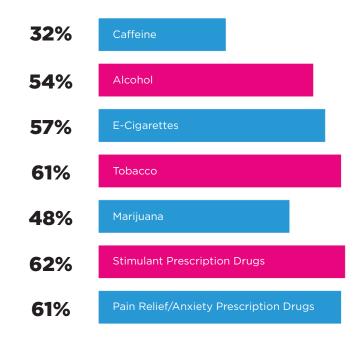
of respondents agree that the use of recreational stimulant prescription drugs is a health risk.



1/6 of YAYA consumers battled a substance use disorder in 2014.²⁶

YAYA consumers worry about developing an addiction to substances.

Respondents selected strongly disagree, disagree or somewhat disagree to the following statement: "I wouldn't worry about developing an addiction to it."



One out of every six American young adults (between the ages of 18 and 25) battled a substance use disorder in 2014. This represents the highest percentage out of any age group at 16.3 percent.²⁶

GAMBLING



25%

A quarter of respondents agree to an extent that they like gambling.

61%

of YAYA consumers don't like gambling.

Online Gambling

54%

of respondents agree that online fantasy sites are a form of gambling.

51%

of respondents do not agree that online gambling is fun/entertaining.

58%

of respondents do not agree that online gambling is a fun way to release stress.

LIFE BETWEEN THE LINES

Endnotes

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