

# RESEARCH INTO RACIAL & ETHNIC STEREOTYPING IN ADVERTISING

Report for the Advertising Standards Authority, prepared by COG Research

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## 1 Executive summary

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the UK's independent regulator of advertising across all media. It applies the Advertising Codes written by the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) and Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP). In order to better understand to what extent, and how, stereotypes associated with race and ethnicity can give rise to widespread or serious offence and/or harm, public opinion research was commissioned to investigate this, primarily from the perspective of members of racial and ethnic minorities.

The focus on racial and ethnic minority perspectives was driven in large part by the killing of George Floyd in 2020 and the global, high-profile reaction that followed, which brought to the forefront discussions about racial and ethnic inequality. From its perspective as the UK advertising regulator, the ASA has been reflecting on what more can be done in relation to advertising, to address factors that cause Black, Asian and other minority racial or ethnic groups to experience disproportionately adverse outcomes in different aspects of their lives.

- The study consisted of a two-stage approach. The qualitative stage consisted of 22 focus groups conducted across the UK with a total of 105 participants, grouped by race/ethnicity, gender and age. This was followed by a quantitative survey of over 2,000 individuals from across the UK, including a boost sample of 1,050 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) respondents.
- Our study found that people can view advertising that features people like themselves as an influence on how they see themselves and how others see them. While it is not regarded as important as other public spaces, advertising is seen as having an impact on conditioning perceptions of self and of others.
- To contextualise the findings of the research, while there are valuable insights to be considered, we know that representation and portrayal of racial and ethnic groups in advertising is not seen as a front of mind issue. The qualitative study showed there was little spontaneous recall of problematic advertising across the groups and only on prompting with examples did real reaction show up.
- Concerns focus on both representation (the extent to which particular communities are visible in advertising) and portrayal (the way that members of the communities are depicted). BAME groups are almost three times more likely to feel *under* or not *represented at all* in ads than White respondents. Over half of BAME respondents feel they are not portrayed

accurately and, of those, a similar proportion feel people from their ethnic group are negatively stereotyped. On a positive note, there is a sense that there has been a change for the better in the representation and portrayal of people from different ethnicities in advertising in recent years.

- There are often different perspectives on representation and portrayal across individual groups. For example, while Jewish participants were not particularly concerned about being represented in ads – and felt the difficulty of portraying Jewish people in ads would lead to the reinforcing of tropes – the Traveller group longed for more positive portrayal in ads. There were also concerns among the East Asian, Indian, Pakistani and Arab respondents at the catch-all term of *Asian* and the importance of their specific heritage to their identity.
- However, there is widespread agreement from research participants across the UK population that advertising in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain should be inclusive of different racial and ethnic groups, both in representation and portrayal. Given its commercial function and recognising different groups are worth targeting, advertising plays an important role in holding up a mirror and showing normal people – suggesting that in some ways, higher expectations are placed on advertising than other areas of public life to be representative.
- When looking specifically at the influence of ads featuring people from different ethnic groups, the study found BAME respondents were significantly more likely, than White respondents, to feel ads showing people from their ethnic group are likely to impact on how society sees them – and how they see themselves.
- From the qualitative phase of the research, we initially identified three broad areas in which participants believed ads had the potential to cause serious or widespread offence and/or harm:
  - **Reinforcement of existing stereotypes.** This was often characterised by participants as ‘always showing us in the same way’, in other words, portraying certain minority racial or ethnic groups in stereotypical roles (such as shopkeepers or taxi drivers) or possessing stereotypical characteristics (depicted through behaviour, accents, hairstyles or dress). This has the potential for others to see people from racial/ethnic minority groups as different to the mainstream by reinforcing the idea that entire groups are a ‘certain way’ rather than communicating their individuality. In addition, this has the potential to adversely impact on others’ expectations and the self-perceptions of people from the Black, Asian, Mixed and other racial or ethnic groups by creating a limiting set of beliefs about what is expected from people from across these communities.

- **Creating new tropes or stereotypes.** Participants spoke of a sense that a one-dimensional picture of people from the Black, Asian, Mixed and other racial/ethnic groups is being created by advertising, particularly around the depiction of family life and relationships and people's appearance. For example, while participants supported the depiction of integrated relationships, there was frustration at the lack of Black families shown; many Black and Asian participants felt that lighter skinned people were more likely to feature in ads; and the use of the hijab was often mentioned as a way of depicting Muslim or Asian women. This was seen to have the potential to create a new set of limiting perceptions of people from minority groups.
  - **Perpetuating or reinforcing racist attitudes and behaviours.** Respondents from all backgrounds had a strongly held objection to ads seen to be perpetuating or reinforcing racist attitudes and behaviours. Many respondents were troubled by the depiction of perceived racist or prejudiced behaviour in ads even if it was apparent that the advertiser's intent was to use such depiction as a means to challenge its negative effects. Some felt this could be seen as implicit reinforcement of the prevalence of those attitudes amongst people who still hold them and also among the wider community. Such depictions could also serve as a very painful reminder of the reality of racism that many BAME respondents experience, but try not to be affected by on a daily basis.
- In the quantitative study these learnings were developed further by looking at ten specific elements of characterisation or storytelling in ads that could give rise to potential harm or offence. We found that around a third of respondents felt that all ten elements, including *humour at the expense of ethnic groups* and *showing ethnic groups as outsiders*, could *cause upset or anger* (defined as offence in this study).
  - There was greater variance in responses when looking at whether these elements could *cause harm*, with half of all respondents saying that *discrimination towards particular ethnic groups* or *showing ethnic groups in a degrading way* could have this effect. This was followed by elements *showing ethnic groups as outsiders* and the *sexualisation of ethnic groups*.
  - This study provides findings that are likely to have practical value. They will assist advertisers, their agencies and regulatory authorities to better determine when portrayals of race or ethnicity in ads are more or less likely to cause harm or offence to the groups of people featured in the ads, and – associated with this – to encourage greater and more faithful representation of BAME people in ads by reducing the potential to inadvertently cause offence or harm.

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## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Background

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the UK's independent regulator of advertising across all media. It applies the Advertising Codes written by the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) and Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP). In order to better understand to what extent, and how, stereotypes associated with race and ethnicity can give rise to widespread or serious offence and/or harm, public opinion research was commissioned to investigate this, primarily from the perspective of members of racial and ethnic minorities.

The focus on racial and ethnic minority perspectives was driven in large part by the killing of George Floyd in 2020 and the global, high-profile reaction that followed, which brought to the forefront discussions about racial and ethnic inequality. From its perspective as the UK advertising regulator, the ASA has been reflecting on what more can be done in relation to advertising, to address factors that cause Black, Asian and other minority racial or ethnic groups to experience disproportionately adverse outcomes in different aspects of their lives, including housing, education and employment.

The ASA has a strong record of taking action against ads that are likely to cause serious or widespread offence and/or harm owing to particular portrayals of race and ethnicity. As an organisation committed to self-initiated, proactive regulation, the ASA must ensure that it keeps pace with how societal values and prevailing standards are constantly evolving and what this means for the interpretation and application of the advertising rules.

The ASA considered it important to get a contemporary and authoritative insight into how race and ethnicity, and how they are portrayed in advertising, might give rise to any potential harm or offence, through a commissioned research project, as part of a multi-strand project.

This research report contains the findings of a combined qualitative and quantitative study that COG Research conducted on behalf of the ASA during the first half of 2021.

### 2.2 Objectives

The objectives of the research, as set out in the initial Request for Proposal (RFP), were that the research should:

- Explore attitudes towards stereotypes associated with race and ethnicity in ads.
- Understand how, if at all, such ads may impact on public attitudes and actions, for example, whether such stereotypes could limit how an individual, on the basis of race or ethnicity, views themselves or others, and influence individuals in how they behave towards others from a particular group. This should include consideration of:
  - individual ads
  - the extent to which, and why, any individual ads are deemed to be seriously offensive or harmful, including because elements of those ads may be seen to contribute to a cumulative effect.
- Explore the areas of harm, offence, and social responsibility in relation to the depiction of stereotypes associated with race and ethnicity in ads and understand the role that advertising plays, amongst other factors, in perpetuating those stereotypes.

## 2.3 Research approach

### Method and samples

Given the need both to understand the public's feelings and beliefs in depth, with the likelihood that help may be required to articulate these, *and* to create an authoritative data set on opinions across the UK and within specific communities, the decision was taken to undertake a two-stage research approach. This consisted of a first stage of qualitative research that covered as many different interest groups as possible, and a second quantitative stage of research that was designed to identify the extent to which attitudes and beliefs were held across individual communities and the UK as a whole.

These studies allowed us to understand opinions on representation and portrayal in ads and to clearly identify and measure the type of content and elements, within an ad, that might cause potential harms across both BAME audiences and the general population, and the potential impact of such portrayals. In addition, it allowed us to gain rich insight that could inform considerations to create further guidance for advertisers seeking to improve representation and portrayal of race and ethnicity in ads.



Because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which had rendered face-to-face research difficult and unwise throughout all of the fieldwork period, both stages of the research were conducted online, with the qualitative research conducted via video-based mini groups, and the quantitative research conducted via our secure servers.

## Qualitative phase

We identified an optimum sample structure of 22 focus groups among discrete audiences as in the matrix below. We sought, as far as possible, to interview participants in peer groups, with relatively tight age banding, gender matching of respondents and moderator, and other quotas to ensure, for example, religious homogeneity within the South Asian samples. This allowed us to ensure that we talked within a group to respondents who had much in common, to build a sense of group identity and safety and encourage open responses, while also covering as broad a spectrum of the overall audience as possible. Of course, there were gaps in coverage, but we knew that we would have the second quantitative stage to ensure that the whole spectrum of voices was heard.

The groups were conducted across the UK, as set out in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Qualitative stage sample matrix

	Female			Male		
<b>Asian</b>	Pakistani 16 - 21 London/SE	Indian 22 - 30 Midlands	East Asian 31 - 44 London/SE	East Asian 13 - 15 North	Pakistani 31 - 44 Scotland	Indian 60+ North
<b>Black</b>	Caribbean 16 - 21 North	African 31 - 44 Scotland	Caribbean 60+ Midlands	African 13 - 15 Midlands	Caribbean 22 - 30 London/SE	African 45 - 60 Midlands
<b>Mixed/multiple ethnicity</b>		22 - 30 South West			16 - 21 North	
<b>White</b>	13 - 15 Midlands	Economically Disadvantaged 22 - 30 Scotland	45 - 60 Wales	16- 21 N. Ireland		Economically Disadvantaged 45 - 60 London/SE
<b>Other</b>		Arab 22 - 30 London/SE		Male/female Traveller 20 - 40 Midlands	Jewish 31 - 44 London/SE	

In total, we interviewed 105 participants across the groups shown above, with groups consisting of between four and five participants each. Online groups typically involve fewer participants than face-to-face groups but benefit from greater engagement and participation by all

participants. Note that two White groups are identified as Economically Disadvantaged, and represent a group with significantly lower income than the other White participants. We wanted to represent this group to identify if their views differed from the other White groups, and if so how.

Also, note that some groups involved 13–15-year-olds. To comply with the Market Research Society (MRS) best practice code, these groups were conducted with confirmed parental permission, and by moderators who had enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

All groups lasted between one and a quarter hours (young people) and one and a half to two hours (adults) and all groups were led by a moderator matched for gender and ethnicity with the participants. The fieldwork took place between the 1st and 23rd March 2021.

By permission, members of the ASA project team observed some groups – the technology used meant that they were able to do so without being visible, audible or otherwise obvious, so the effect on group dynamics was minimised.

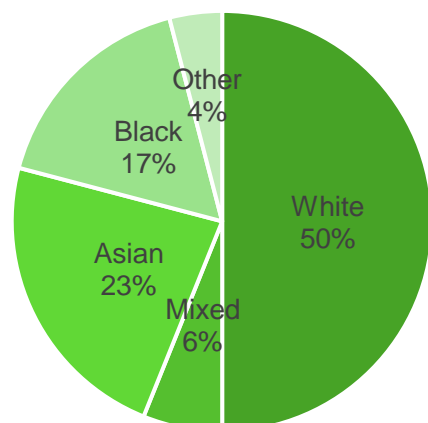
The discussion guide can be found in Appendix 1.

## Quantitative phase

Following the qualitative research and interim debrief a survey was developed, with fieldwork conducted between 26th May and 14th June 2021.

A total of 2,100 interviews were conducted across the UK with the sample being equally split between self-identified White respondents and those from other ethnicities. This resulted in 950 BAME adults aged 16 or over, 950 White adults and 100 13–15-year-olds from each community. The actual sample achieved is shown in Figure 2 and the full sample breakdown can be found in Appendix 3.

Figure 2: Quantitative sample breakdown



The results were subsequently weighted back to be nationally representative. This approach meant that we could draw conclusions about the UK as a whole as well as look, in detail, at the views of Asian, Black and Mixed race respondents with confidence. Throughout the report, the results for Asian, Black and Mixed race respondents are shown. The sample size for those identifying as 'Other' was not large enough to show results separately – these respondents are included within the data presented as 'BAME – Total'.

**Please note that chart data has been rounded for presentational purposes. As a result, there may be minor variance between combined figures referred to in the report, which have been calculated using unrounded figures, and any calculations based on rounded figures shown in the charts.**

The full questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4.

## **2.4 Use of stimulus material**

### **Qualitative phase**

Within the focus groups we showed over 40 different advertising executions from across different media, including TV, press, radio, outdoor and digital ads. Some of these ads had been identified through complaints received by the ASA and others were identified by the ASA and COG teams as potential examples which may help generate material discussions on the portrayal of different racial or ethnic groups. A full list of the ads tested can be found in Appendix 2.

Within each group, we first looked at attitudes towards ads featuring characters from a similar racial or ethnic background to the group participants. Then a range of other ads were rotated across the groups so that all participants saw ads that featured their community as well as those featuring a range of other communities. We focused on between 8 and 12 ads within most groups.

**The use of advertising materials was primarily intended to help understand the way in which viewers assign the potential for harm or offence to a range of ads, rather than any attempt to judge or test the effectiveness of the ads. We introduced them in both the qualitative and quantitative research as aids to the discussion of wider themes, rather than asking people to evaluate their effectiveness as ads or as emissaries for brands.**

## Quantitative phase

In the quantitative phase of the research, we focused on a smaller number of ads that had created mixed feelings in the qualitative phase, so that we could be more confident about our learnings on ads like these.

Each individual saw two TV ads and one press/outdoor ad with a total of four TV and two press/outdoor ads tested. Each ad was viewed by just over 1,000 respondents.

## 2.5 Terminology

The research reinforced the importance of terminology, and how people choose to refer to themselves and other groups. Within this report we have used the following conventions, in alphabetical order, for brevity and simplicity, especially in any charts.

- **Arab:** refers to those self-classified as Arab in the qualitative stage of the research. In the quantitative phase they are represented within the 'BAME – Total' group.
- **Asian:** used for brevity to refer to all who self-classified in the qualitative or quantitative stage as Asian, and includes South, East and Other Asian, which we recognise as distinct and divergent groups. Within the qualitative phase of research, we recruited specific groups of Indian, Pakistani /Bangladeshi and East Asian respondents.
- **BAME:** covering all Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants across the research.
- **Black:** covering both the Black African and Black Caribbean groups in the qualitative and quantitative stages of the research. Where relevant, distinctions in opinions are highlighted.
- **Jewish:** covering those who self-identified as Jewish in the qualitative research and, as noted below, their views are shown separately where relevant.
- **Mixed:** to refer to all who self-identified as being from mixed or multiple ethnic backgrounds.
- **Traveller:** covering those from the Roma, Irish Traveller and other Traveller communities in the qualitative research.

- **White:** referring to all self-identified White respondents both in the qualitative and the quantitative phases of the study. Note that this generally included all groups who also self-identified as fitting to some extent under the broader 'White' group, including Jewish and Traveller respondents. Two mini-groups were held with a specific group of White English respondents in the qualitative research who we identified as Economically Disadvantaged because of their low income and reliance on benefits. Their views are also grouped under the White category except where it is relevant to refer to them specifically.

## **2.6 Why pre-tasking was avoided**

In research it is often desirable to carry out pre-tasking exercises to get respondents to think about and be more aware of the subject area, and their feelings about it, prior to joining in a group discussion. In some cases, this is also used as a technique before quantitative research.

In this case we felt the approach was best avoided, and that it was more important to approach the subject fresh within the controlled environment of the group discussions. This is because we wanted to ensure we had a clear reading on which ads (if any) came up when the subject of portrayal of race or ethnicity was raised, rather than artificially inflating the level of awareness of such ads by asking people in advance to think about or look out for them. Equally importantly, we wanted to get a clean reading on how people felt about such ads by ensuring the discussion of them took place within the group environment rather than people having already thought about and rehearsed articulating their feelings about the ads in advance of the group sessions.

We feel this approach was vindicated as we saw a noticeable development in people's feelings and views during the course of the discussion, and in response to other points of view being shared: if we had pre-tasked, we would have missed this critical information about how people feel and how sharing feelings allows others to express their views.

## **2.7 Strengths and limitations of this research**

This is a research project that has been conducted using appropriate quality controls and safeguards to ensure quality and integrity of responses and, as far as possible, the honesty of respondents. It can only be a snapshot of a specific group's views, rather than an authoritative census. The nature of research recruitment means that certain types of respondents may be

impossible to reach within the scope of a study like this. An obvious example is people without internet access, who will have been excluded by default from both the qualitative and quantitative stages of the study.

However, given the scope of the study we believe that this has minimal impact on the value of the results. Our concern is with broad attitudes among groups towards advertising which is largely carried in mainstream commercial media.

It should be highlighted that any research involves choices of what questions to ask and what stimulus to show. However, at both stages of this research there was opportunity for respondents to feed back their own points of view about topics that may not have been explicitly covered.

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### 3 Factors that influence attitudes toward portrayal of race and ethnicity in ads

#### Summary

People see ethnicity as a more or less important part of their identity, and BAME respondents place greater emphasis on it than their White counterparts. Some groups are much more aware of being members of a distinct group, and more invested in how they are seen by and portrayed by others.

Feelings about how people see each other and themselves are shaped by many factors, with education, employment, the media and politics seen as some of the more important factors in forming views.

Advertising is seen as *relatively* less important as a factor in influencing how people see each other and themselves. We also found that representation and portrayal of racial and ethnic groups in advertising is not seen as a front of mind issue, with little spontaneous recall of problematic advertising among members of any ethnic group. Yet it is seen as important that advertising does a good job of portraying ethnicity positively and accurately.

BAME groups are almost three times more likely to feel *under* or *not represented* at all in ads than White respondents. Looking at portrayal in ads, over half of BAME respondents feel they are not portrayed accurately and, of those, a similar proportion feel people from their ethnic group are negatively stereotyped. On a positive note, there is a sense that there has been a change for the better in the representation and portrayal of people from different ethnicities in advertising in recent years.

There are often different perspectives on representation and portrayal across individual groups. For example, while participants in the Jewish group were not particularly concerned about being represented in ads – and felt the difficulty of portraying Jewish people in ads would lead to the reinforcing of tropes – the Traveller group longed for more positive portrayal in ads. There were also concerns among the East Asian, Indian, Pakistani and Arab respondents at the catch-all term of *Asian* and the importance of their specific heritage to their identity.

However, there is widespread agreement from research participants across the UK population that advertising in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain should be inclusive, both in the representation and portrayal of different racial and ethnic groups. Given its commercial function and recognising

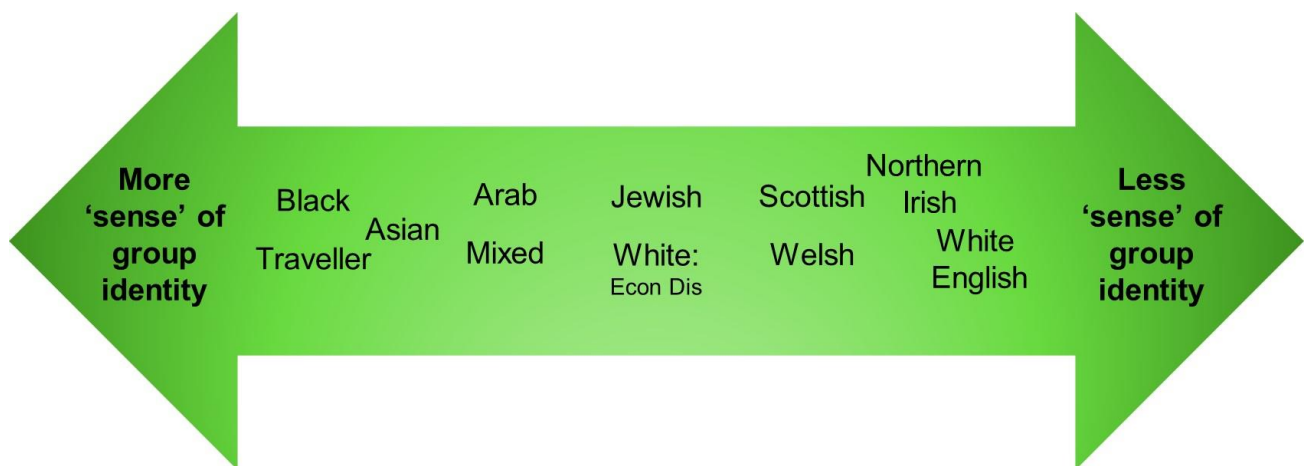
different groups are worth targeting, advertising plays an important role in holding up a mirror and showing normal people – suggesting that in some ways, higher expectations are placed on advertising than other areas of public life to be representative.

When looking specifically at the influence of ads featuring people from different ethnic groups, the study found BAME respondents were significantly more likely to feel ads showing people from *their ethnic group* are likely to impact on how society sees them – and how they see themselves.

### 3.1 The self-identity of participants

At both the qualitative and quantitative stages of the research we recruited respondents based on their self-identification in terms of race and ethnicity. We did not explore this specifically within the qualitative stage, although we did give respondents the opportunity to discuss their feelings about identity. What emerged from this discussion, which was primarily intended as a context-setting exercise, was that there was a spectrum of feelings about the importance of race and ethnicity as an element both in self-identity and how individuals were perceived by others. This is summarised in Figure 3 which shows where different groups lie on that spectrum.

Figure 3: Spectrum of group identity



This is not an authoritative mapping exercise but demonstrates that within our research there were some groups who were much more aware of being members of a distinct group, and more invested in how they are seen, and portrayed, by others.

Those in our study who had the strongest sense of group identity were the Black African and Black Caribbean groups. There was no clear sense of a difference between them, in the sense of group identity, although at a specific level those of African heritage were more likely to refer to their origins within a specific African country.



“I think with Black Lives Matter it has made even more of a sense of shared identity, but we have always been comfortable with calling ourselves Black, as well as maybe British or Nigerian or Jamaican.”  
Black, Female 31–44, Scotland

The Traveller respondents showed an equally strong sense of group identity, although again it was layered with specifics of distinct heritage within the overall descriptor of Traveller (e.g., Irish Traveller, Roma, etc.).

“We definitely feel a group apart, in how we see ourselves and others see us: there are differences, Irish or Roma, but Traveller is very much who we are.”  
Traveller, Female 20–40, Mids

Jewish respondents also had a strong sense of group identity, and also a strong sense of how they are seen and portrayed by the outside world.

“Obviously we are all Jewish, that is a strong identity thing, we recognize it in each other – to outsiders they may not say ‘he is Jewish’ but there is definitely a sense that we are seen as a distinct group, for good or ill.”  
Jewish, Male 31–44, London SE

Among the Home Nations we saw a slightly higher sense of group identity among the Northern Irish respondents as a group, who felt that they had a distinct place and set of interests within the UK, while our Scottish and Welsh respondents were less likely to focus on national issues within the context of a discussion around representation in advertising.

“There is a sense of being a bit apart in Northern Ireland, but that is about other things, not the ads.”  
White, Male 16–21, NI

“We are Welsh, British, whatever: it depends if we are talking about rugby. But as to ads, no one expects Welsh versions of ads, or even a Welsh star!”  
White, Female 45–60, Wales

The nature of this study meant that we did not explore regional issues in any depth. This is not to say nationalistic feelings do not exist among the Home Nations, rather to say that from an advertising representation point of view, showing (or not showing) Welsh or Scottish or indeed Northern Irish people in ads was largely seen as irrelevant. Accent was clearly a major signifier here, and it was seen as a good thing that different accents were featured (not just national ones) but no one recalled examples of them being used in any way other than positive. This differed

from the BAME audiences where there could be some sensitivity about how accents were portrayed.

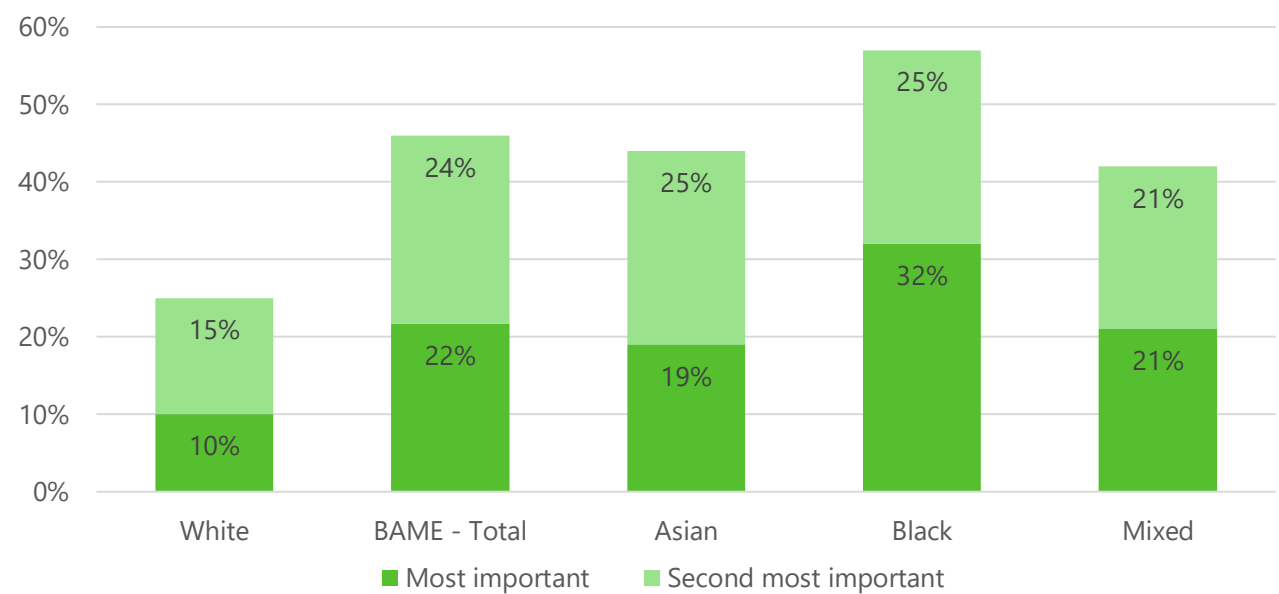
“You notice accents being used more, regional, Welsh whatever. I think it is nice, it doesn’t seem malicious.”  
White, Female 45–60, Wales

“With black and brown people in ads, sometimes the way they talk can be a bit crazy, it is as if they are having fun at us.”  
Mixed, Male 16–21, North

3.2 How ethnicity sits within other factors

In the quantitative research, we looked at the emphasis respondents placed on ethnicity as part of their identity, compared with age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and religion. Figure 4 sets out the proportion of respondents who said their ethnicity is the most or second most important factor.

Figure 4  
Importance of ethnicity to identity



Please rank the options in order of importance in relation to how you would describe your identity - Ethnicity

BAME respondents (22%) were more than twice as likely as their White counterparts (10%) to say ethnicity is the most important factor to their identity. This is in line with the 2018 Lloyds Banking Group study<sup>1</sup> which also highlighted the greater importance placed on ethnicity among the main minority groups.

There were few other significant differences between demographic groups, except that the proportion of Black women who said ethnicity was the most important factor was 10 points higher than Black men (38% and 28% respectively). Again, this reflects the Lloyds Banking Group research from 2018, where we saw Black women placing high importance on ethnicity. In comparison, we found gender is the most important factor for both White men and women (40% and 45% respectively).

It is also interesting to note that religion was seen as the most important factor for 27% of BAME respondents, compared with 6% of White respondents.

### 3.3 Attitudes toward portrayal in ads and other public spaces

Both the qualitative and quantitative studies indicated that advertising is not seen as being particularly influential in **how people see themselves and each other** compared with other public and personal spaces such as education, employment, politics, news/current affairs or sport. In the qualitative study, this was often explained as a reflection of the importance of advertising per se, rather than a detailed analysis of how influential it might be.

“There are so many things that go to make up how we see ourselves, and our country. Ads are mostly just selling us things not telling us how to live.”

White, Male 45 – 60, London SE

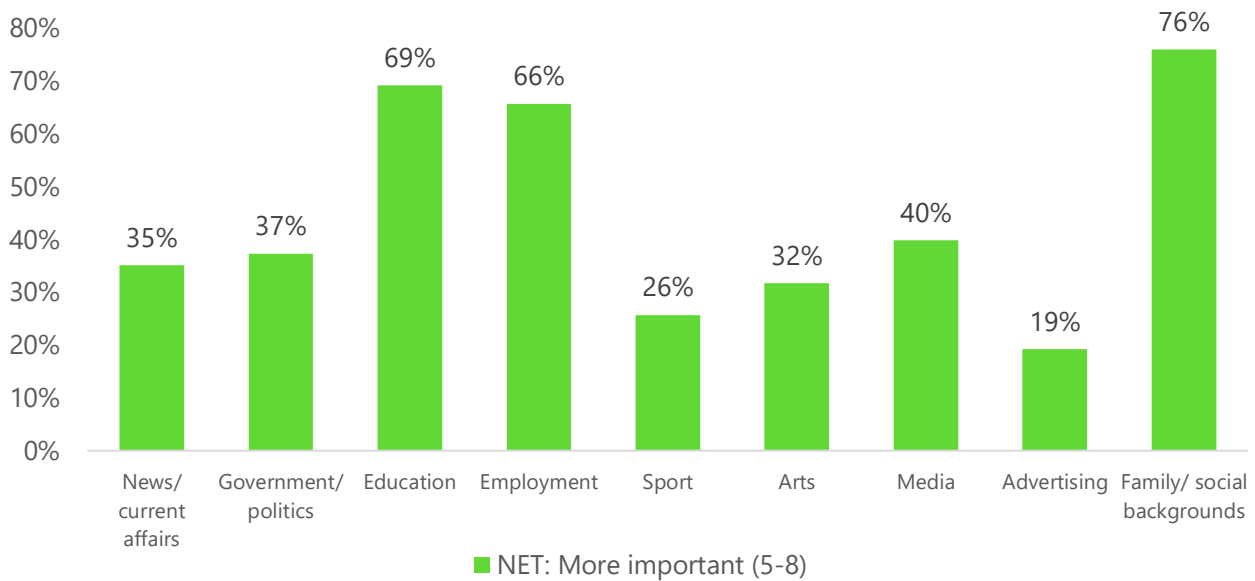
This is not to say advertising is thought of as ineffective or not having influence; it is a relative measure of how it is seen against other elements of public communication and discourse. We can see this from the quantitative study in Figure 5. This is in response to a question that asked people to rank each of a set of elements in terms of how important these are in influencing how people see each other and themselves. The question allowed them to rank each of the nine elements between 0 and 8 with 8 being the most important – the scores in Figure 5 are aggregated for all those scoring an element 5 or more (more important).

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<sup>1</sup> Lloyds Banking Group: Ethnicity in Advertising – Reflecting Modern Britain in 2018 (Study conducted by COG Research) [https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/assets/pdfs/who-we-are/responsible-business/inclusion-and-diversity/lloyds\\_banking\\_group-ethnicity\\_in\\_advertising.pdf](https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/assets/pdfs/who-we-are/responsible-business/inclusion-and-diversity/lloyds_banking_group-ethnicity_in_advertising.pdf)

Figure 5

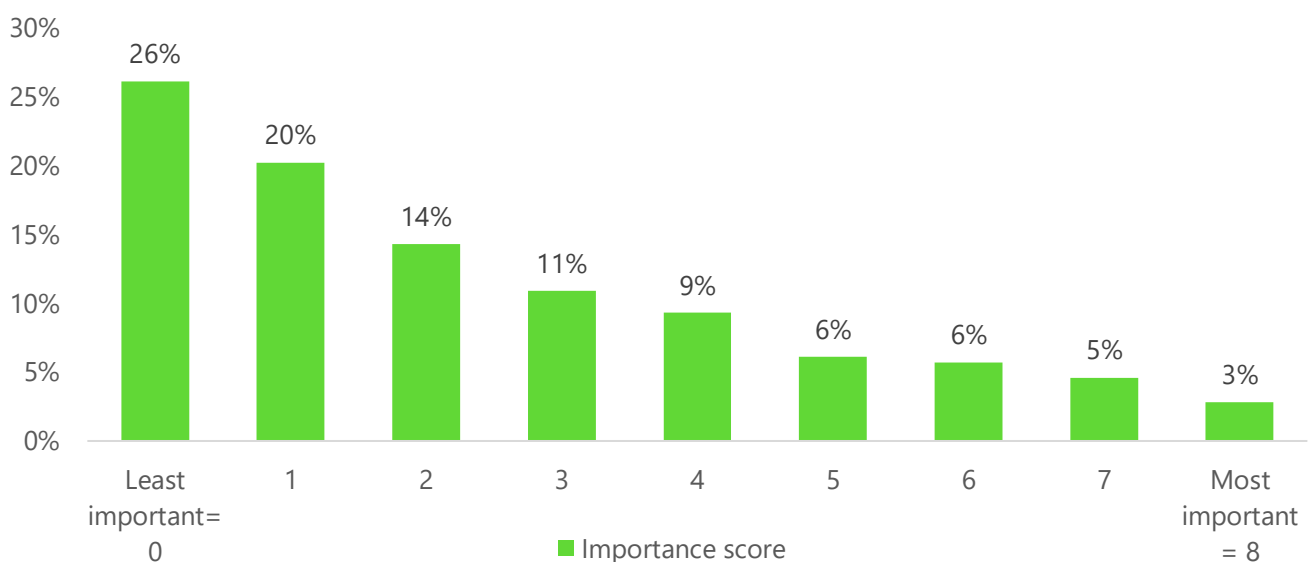
How important do you feel each of these are in influencing how people see each other and themselves?



If we look at the detailed scores for advertising, only 3% put it as most important while 26% put it as least important and 72% put it in the bottom 4 (Figure 6).

Figure 6

How important do you feel each of these are in influencing how people see each other and themselves? - Advertising



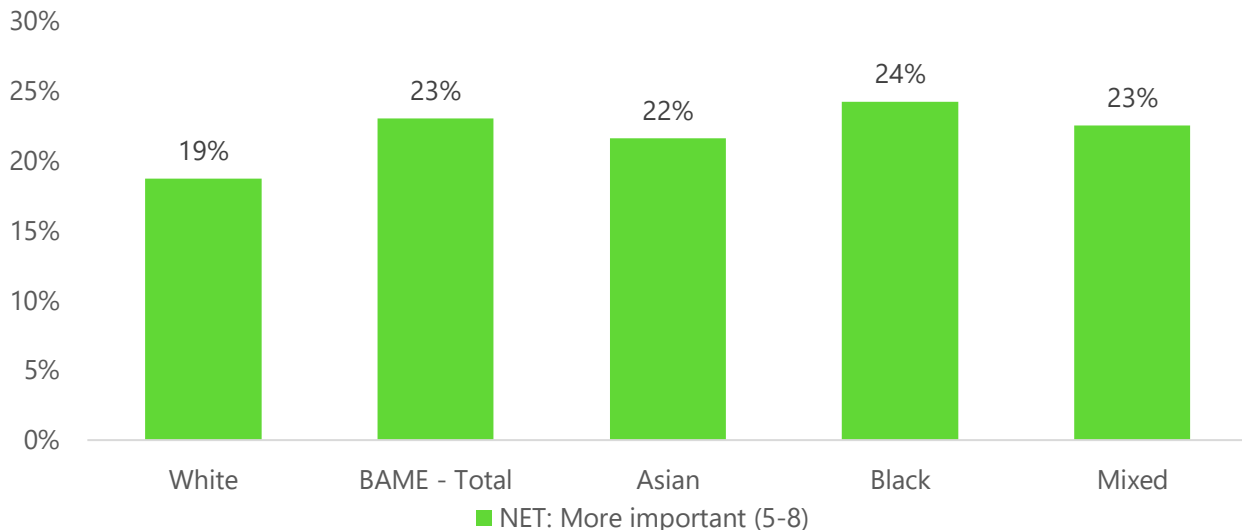
In the qualitative research we saw similar results where we found that, across the spectrum, people felt that they saw people 'like them' represented primarily in news, entertainment (TV

and film), politics and sport. We focused on the importance of representation in those spheres in the qualitative research; we did not examine areas such as education, employment and family, which showed the highest scores, in terms of the extent of influence, in the quantitative findings.

Respondents noted that these representations can either be positive or negative, or often neutral, but they were particularly significant for those from BAME groups, where they felt a sense of being in a minority and therefore feeling that representation matters more to them. Because they were aware of being *numerically* in a minority in the UK, they were more attentive to any examples of presence or portrayal of their (or other) minorities in public life, and felt that the presence and portrayal of people who looked like them had importance for their community's self-perception, and for the way that other communities might see them as a group. Understandably, these feelings were not expressed among the White respondents, although many could understand the importance that BAME groups might attach to seeing people who looked like them. This was clear in the quantitative study where we saw that advertising was seen as slightly more influential among those from BAME groups as in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7

How important do you feel each of these are in influencing how people see each other and themselves? - Advertising



Taking these results into account, it is important to contextualise the findings set out in this report, as we know that representation and portrayal of racial and ethnic groups in advertising is not seen as a front of mind issue. The qualitative study showed there was little spontaneous recall of problematic advertising among members of any ethnic group and only on prompting with examples did real reaction show up. So, while there are valuable insights to be considered, it is important to be cognisant of the limited presence these issues (and advertising as a whole) have in people's immediate daily experience.

### 3.4 Representation in media and ads

In the focus groups we found that there were important distinctions to be drawn between ‘**representation**’ and ‘**portrayal**’ – topics that have also come up in both the 2015<sup>2</sup> and 2018<sup>3</sup> studies conducted by Lloyds Banking Group on this subject, and the 2018 study for Ofcom on Representation and Portrayal in the BBC<sup>4</sup>. To put it simply ‘**representation**’ is about showing members of a group in advertising so that both members of that group and others can see they are being included.

In the quantitative questionnaire we explained this to respondents as:

*When we say ‘represented’ we are talking about how much/how often people are shown.*

However, ‘**portrayal**’ is more nuanced and in many ways more important: it is about the stories that are being told about the represented characters, and the meanings that might be attached to them by members of a group and others. Again, in the quantitative research we explained it as follows:

*When we say ‘portrayed’, we mean the way in which people are shown*

In Figure 8 we see how people feel about the level of representation in the media. It is telling that, when we focus specifically on how well groups are represented in the media, we see there is a real disparity between how White and BAME groups feel, with the majority of White respondents feeling they *get the right amount of coverage* (55%) and no other group having a similar point of view. In contrast, a similar proportion of BAME respondents (53%) feel they are *underrepresented*.

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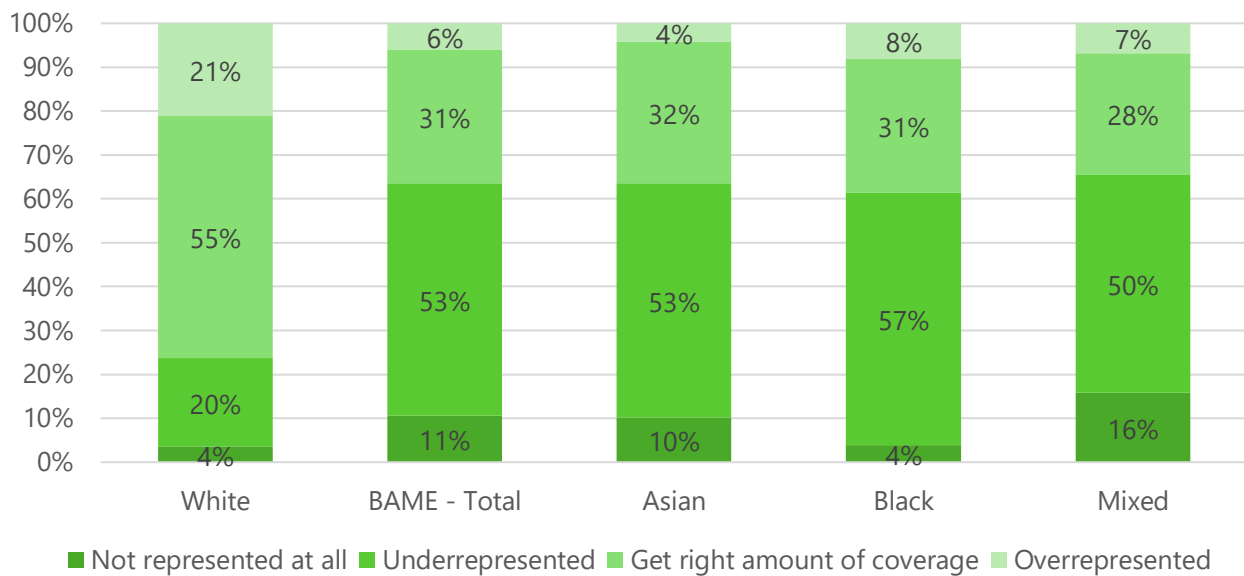
<sup>2</sup> Lloyds Banking Group: Reflecting Modern Britain? A study into inclusion and diversity in advertising (Study conducted by COG Research) <https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/who-we-are/responsible-business/inclusion-and-diversity/reflecting-modern-britain.html>

<sup>3</sup> Lloyds Banking Group: Ethnicity in Advertising – Reflecting Modern Britain in 2018 (Study conducted by COG Research) [https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/assets/pdfs/who-we-are/responsible-business/inclusion-and-diversity/lloyds\\_banking\\_group-ethnicity\\_in\\_advertising.pdf](https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/assets/pdfs/who-we-are/responsible-business/inclusion-and-diversity/lloyds_banking_group-ethnicity_in_advertising.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Ofcom: Representation and portrayal of audiences on BBC television [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/124252/kantar-bbc-qualitative-research.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/124252/kantar-bbc-qualitative-research.pdf)

Figure 8

Do you think people from your ethnic group are under or over represented in the media?



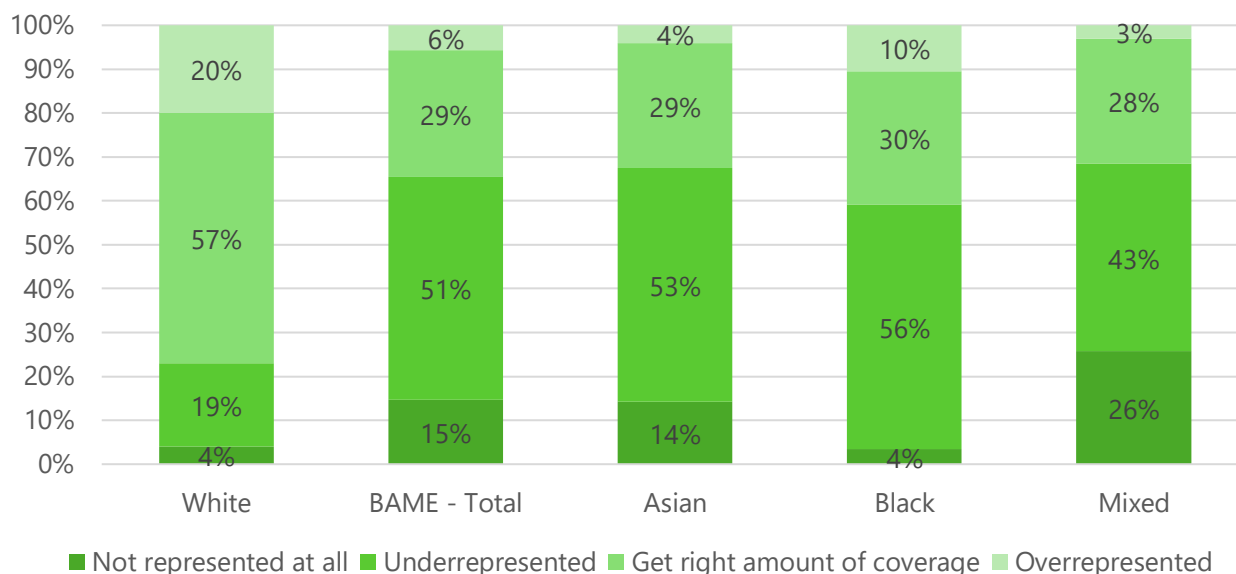
It is interesting that feeling *not represented at all* is more common among Mixed (16%) and Asian (10%) respondents, while Black respondents are more likely to choose being under-represented (57%).

When we focus on **advertising**, we see a similar disparity between White and BAME respondents in terms of feeling *under* or *over represented* in ads.

Figure 9 shows that, again, White respondents (57%) broadly feel that advertising representation is about right, while the BAME groups have a very different point of view.

Figure 9

Do you think people from your ethnic group are under or over represented in adverts?



While 77% of White respondents feel they are *overrepresented* or *get the right amount of coverage* in ads, this proportion goes down strikingly among all BAME groups to 40% or less. BAME groups (66%) were almost three times more likely to feel *under* or *not represented at all* compared with White respondents (23%).

Mixed (26%) and Asian (14%) respondents are more likely to feel they are *not represented at all* compared with Black respondents (4%). Interestingly, Channel 4's study, *Mirror on the Industry*<sup>5</sup>, which analysed 1,000 TV ads shown between May and September 2018, found 37% of ads featured Black people, compared with 12% featuring South Asian people – far smaller proportions show Black or Asian people in lead roles.

There were also comments in the qualitative research from Black and Asian respondents that if a BAME person is cast in an ad, they are more likely to be light skinned or Mixed race, but it is evident that our Mixed sample didn't feel they were represented in ads.

### 3.5 Portrayal in media and ads

Both in the focus groups and the quantitative study we also saw that there was an issue not just in the level of representation, but with the accuracy of portrayal, with BAME respondents more likely to say their portrayal in the media was inaccurate, as set out in Figure 10.

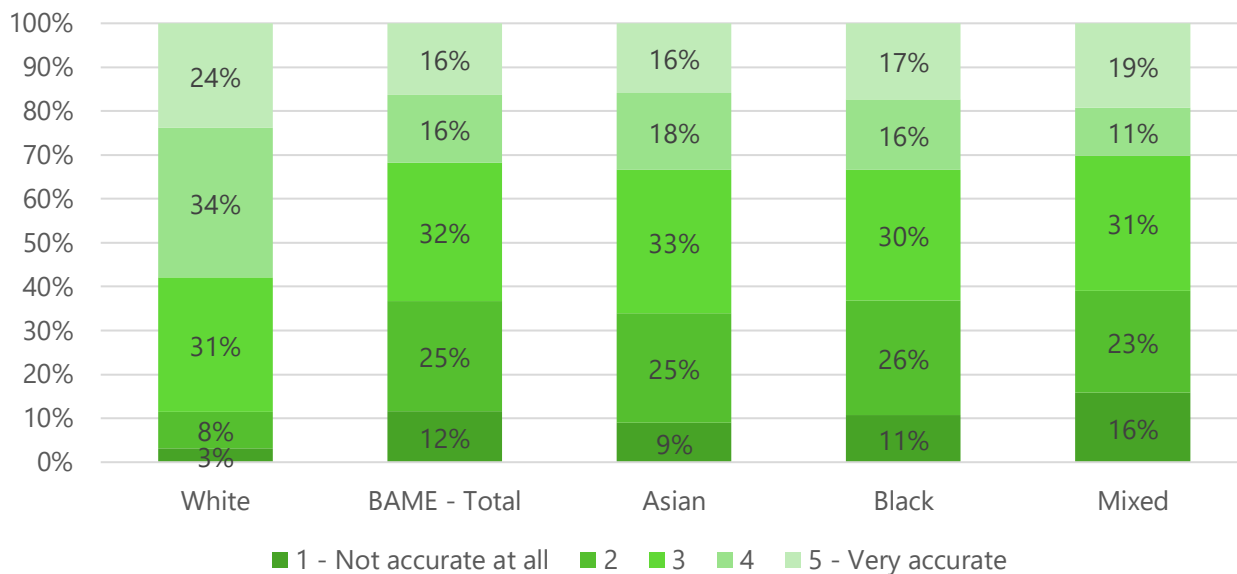
<sup>5</sup> Channel 4: *Mirror on the Industry* – How diverse and inclusive is advertising in 2019?

<https://www.4sales.com/inclusioninsight#key-insights-from-2019>



Figure 10

When people from your ethnic group are portrayed in the media, do you think this portrayal is accurate?



While over half the White sample (58%) felt their portrayal was *quite* or *very accurate* (ranking it 4 or 5), this figure falls away for all BAME groups to around a third (32%) – with 37% of BAME respondents saying portrayal was not accurate (ranking it 1 or 2).

And when we focus on accuracy of portrayal in ads, it is clear there is a similar divide in opinion between the White and BAME samples (Figure 11).

Here we see that while four out of five of the White sample (82%) feel broadly accurately portrayed in ads, the majority of all BAME groups feel that they are not portrayed accurately (53% of BAME respondents say *broadly no*).

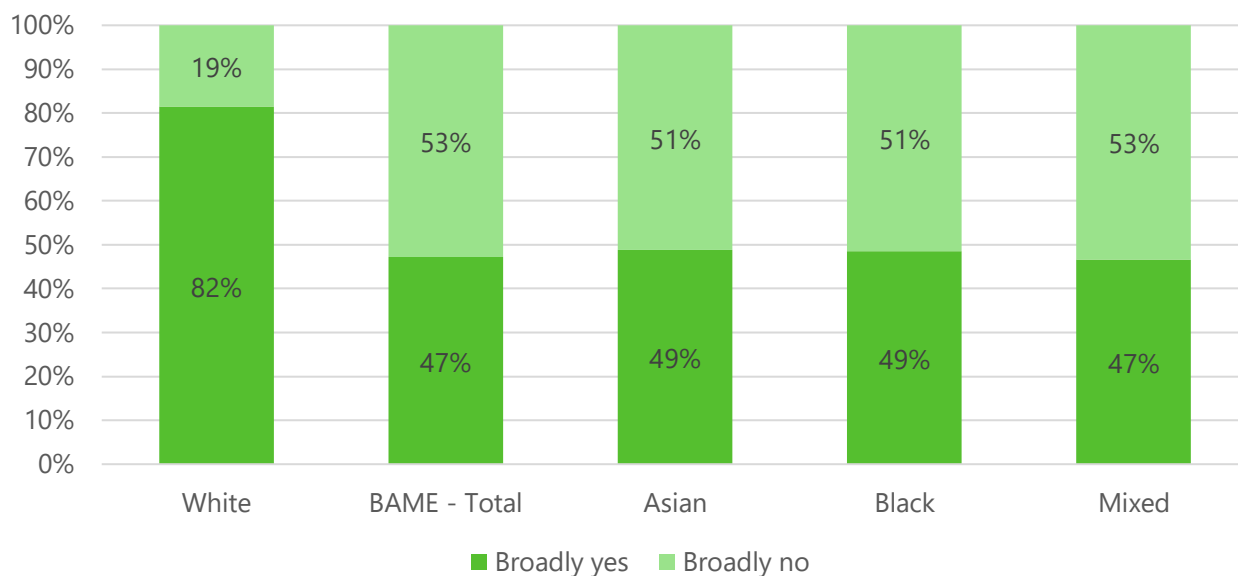
The results show BAME women are more likely to feel they are not portrayed accurately (57%), compared with BAME men (49%). Interestingly, research by Unilever found 55% of women of Asian heritage believe that stereotypes in advertising don't represent them at all<sup>6</sup>.

Those who felt their ethnic group was not accurately portrayed in ads were then asked a set of questions about the representation and portrayal of *their* ethnic group – while those who felt their ethnic group was accurately portrayed, were asked a similar set of questions about the representation and portrayal of *other* ethnic groups (results shown in Section 3.7, Why representation and portrayal in ads matter).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2021/06/23/half-people-marginalized-communities-subject-ad-stereotypes-says-unilever-study>

Figure 11

Do you think people from your ethnic group are portrayed accurately in adverts?



Inaccurate portrayal often emerged as a concern in the focus groups, with many BAME respondents saying that they felt that portrayals of BAME people in advertising often relied on stereotypes and simplistic ideas. Examples given included Asians often being portrayed as shopkeepers or taxi drivers, and Black people being shown in association with sports or music or being a joker. It was felt that they are seldom portrayed as being ‘the boss’ or in a position of power/leadership, and that these portrayals and choices around depiction had a subtle but negative effect on how people from the BAME community saw themselves and also how others saw them.

“You don’t often see a black leader, or businessman or especially woman. Same is true for brown people. It’s a sportsman, rapper, joker, rasta, or a taxi driver or shopkeeper, or a cute mixed girl – we want to see all of us, and for everyone else to see us too.”

Black, Female 16–21, North

A common theme was that advertising could be a force for either good or reinforcing existing, unhelpful stereotypes.

“When they show something unexpected, or when they show a normal Black family like that supermarket Christmas ad. It just makes you feel part of things.”

Black, Female 31 – 44, Scotland

“I think they have just one or two ideas and actors – always a pretty mixed-race girl to tick the box. But sometimes you think they have really taken trouble.”

Asian, Male 31 – 44, Scotland

### 3.6 Group-specific findings

Figure 12 below summarises how the different groups felt about representation per se, and how well they felt advertising portrayed them as a group.

Figure 12: Group perspectives on representation and portrayal

<p><u>Black Portrayal</u> Under-represented Often a token presence Seldom a leader Seldom families Honourable exceptions Sense of improvement in recent years</p>	<p><u>Asian Portrayal</u> Under-represented Often clichéd - shopkeeper or doctor Mainly seen in targeted ads - Asian channels Only 1 type of Asian</p>	<p><u>Mixed Group Portrayal</u> Under-represented Tick box tokenism Sense that mixed families not shown Looking for mirror / affirmation</p>
<p><u>Arab Portrayal</u> Absent By default in other categories, Asian, Muslim Only seen on Instagram etc.</p>	<p><u>Jewish Portrayal</u> Absent Not expected or looked out for Some recall of Jewish actors</p>	<p><u>Traveller Portrayal</u> Absent Some high profile ads recalled e.g. Channel 4's Bigger Fatter Gypsier</p>
<p><u>Welsh Portrayal</u> Amusement at clichés Difficult names No real sense of stereotyping</p>	<p><u>Scottish Portrayal</u> Seldom seen as issue Confusion with 'local' ads In past might be stereotyped</p>	<p><u>Irish Portrayal</u> Seldom seen as issue Confusion with 'local' ads Welcome representation</p>

Importantly, this, and many of the findings set out later in this report, suggest that while there is agreement on many issues across the BAME groups, individual groups often have different perspectives on representation and portrayal in advertising.

There was feedback among our Asian and Arab respondents about the way that the portrayal of Asian people in advertising (and the use of the catch-all term Asian) tended to gloss over differences and defaulted to generalised stereotypes. The East Asian, Indian, Pakistani and Arab respondents emphasised their specific heritage and its importance to their sense of ethnic identity along with their sense of being British. That may be at a regional level, not even a national one, but it was how they saw themselves and this mattered deeply to them.

“I think the Asian label is OK, but it is not how we see ourselves. When we talk about ourselves with friends, we are Lebanese, Pakistani, Indian, Iranian, Tamil, Punjabi – and sometimes a mix of these and others. But everyone has a separate identity.”

Arab, Female 22–30, London SE

The Asian and Arab samples were also particularly attuned to the use of religious dress as a signifier of a character’s ethnic identity, and in particular the portrayal of women wearing the hijab as an identifier. This was also picked up in other groups, with the Black and Jewish groups also commenting that this could be a good visual way of symbolising diversity, and in itself was a good thing that it was being shown.

“Sometimes you just see a woman in a hijab for a second in an ad, and it is as if they have thought, ‘right we have covered them now’.”

Arab, Female 22–30, London SE

“With the hijab, it is good to show religious inclusion. They could show a bloke in a yarmulke but to be honest that would be weird. I never expect to see that!”

Jewish, Male 31–44, London SE

This raises an important wider point, which is that it is clearly easier to portray and therefore include some groups and identities than others. This does not take away from the desire, the hope, for inclusive portrayal. For example, in the quote above we see the theme in the Jewish group about the difficulty of portrayal of Jewish people in ads, and the concern that portrayal can then reinforce tropes that are harmful such as greed, mean-ness or big noses.

“As soon as you show these things, it starts harking back to propaganda. To be honest I would rather they didn’t try.”

Jewish, Male 31–44, London SE

While the Jewish group were resigned and not particularly concerned about not being represented, the Traveller group felt more strongly singled out and longed for more positive portrayal.

“It’s the last group you can be racist about.”

Traveller, Female 20–40, Mids

“We don’t see people like us in ads as actors, but sometimes we are shown as the problem. We do have a culture, creative skills, it would be great to see some positive representation for once.”

Traveller, Female 20–40, Mids

However, this group again recognised the problem of how to portray and symbolize group membership without resorting to tropes and stereotypes.

“It’s not just showing someone in a caravan.”

Traveller, Female 20–40, Mids

### 3.7 Why representation and portrayal in ads matter<sup>7</sup>

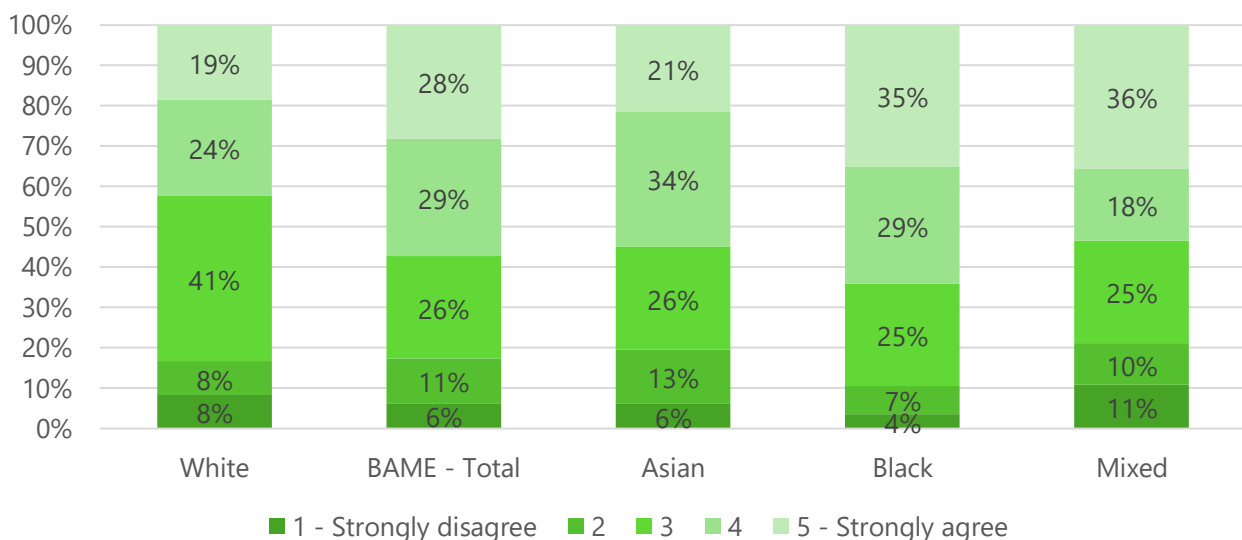
While many groups felt they were still under-represented or not visible, it was clear that there were mixed views amongst different groups as to its significance. For example, the Jewish group pointed out that there was seldom any representation of Jewish people within ads, except maybe the use of a recognised Jewish actor, but that this was neither expected nor problematic. However, among the BAME groups there was more of a sense of desire to be shown and to see people like themselves within the ads.

The converse of this is the sense of being negatively stereotyped, and both in the qualitative and the quantitative studies we saw evidence of the belief that ads perpetuated negative stereotypes.

Figure 13

To what extent do you think: People from my ethnic group are negatively stereotyped in advertising

*Base: People from your ethnic group portrayed accurately in ads - Broadly no*



<sup>7</sup> Those who felt their ethnic group was not accurately portrayed in ads were then asked a set of questions about the representation and portrayal of *their* ethnic group. Those who felt their ethnic group was accurately portrayed were asked a similar set of questions about the representation and portrayal of *other* ethnic groups. This section sets out these results.

Among White respondents who felt they were generally not portrayed accurately in ads, nearly one in five (19%) strongly agree that their ethnic group is negatively stereotyped, and among BAME groups this is a more common view, with a third of both Black (35%) and Mixed (36%) groups *strongly agreeing* with this position (Figure 13). Overall, 57% of BAME respondents who felt they were generally not portrayed accurately in ads, felt strongly or tended to agree that ‘people from my ethnic group are negatively stereotyped in advertising’, compared with 42% of White respondents.

In the qualitative study, there was a clear sense that there has been a change for the better compared with advertising from 10 or 20 years ago. Even the younger respondents sensed that there had been a change, and older respondents were able to articulate changes in terms of the featuring of people from different ethnicities in the ads.

“In the old days you hardly saw any Black faces, or it could just be some comedy thing: now you feel the ads are much more representative.”

White, Male 45–60, London SE

“You see a wider mix of people in the ads today, more people who look like us. You see an old ad it looks very different!”

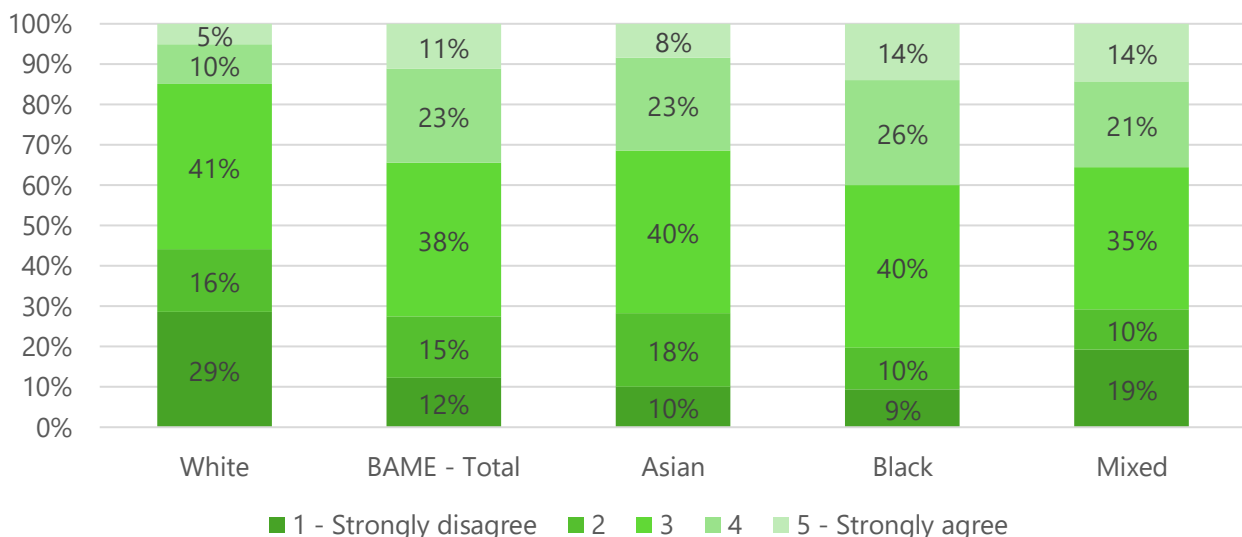
Asian, Male 13–15, North

Figure 14 below sets out the data from the quantitative stage.

Figure 14

To what extent do you think: The way people from my ethnic group are portrayed in adverts has improved in recent years

Base: People from your ethnic group portrayed accurately in ads - Broadly no



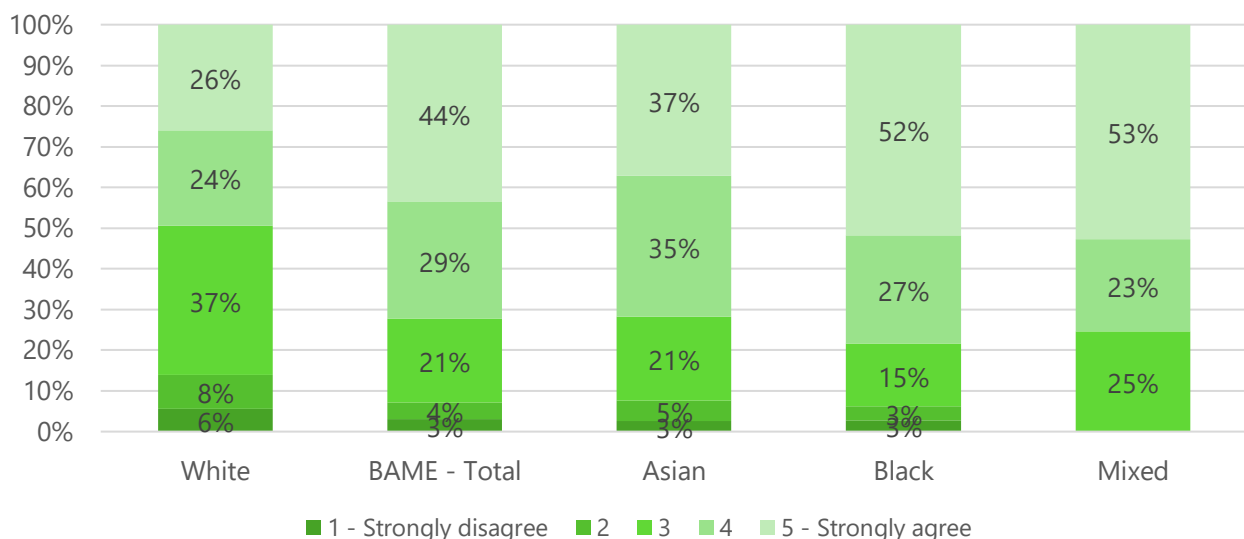
Agreement with the statement that there has been improvement in the portrayal of *my ethnic group* is highest among BAME respondents, while White respondents are more likely to disagree. Overall agreement with the proposition is at 34% among BAME respondents (base: those who feel people from their ethnic group tend not to be accurately portrayed in ads), while 15% of White respondents agree. Looking at the specific BAME groups, Black respondents were most likely to agree with this statement, which actually bears out findings from other semiotic studies<sup>8</sup> on casting in advertising that showed the biggest growth in ads featuring minority characters was among the Black audience.

If evidence were required that positive portrayal, inclusion and representation matter, it is clear from Figure 15 below, which shows what we found when respondents were asked if they agreed that *'it's nice to see people from my ethnic group in adverts'*. This theme is supported by findings from the study by Lloyds Banking Group on Championing Modern Britain<sup>9</sup>, which highlights the importance to members of minority groups of being shown and acknowledged.

Figure 15

To what extent do you think: It's nice to see people from my ethnic group in adverts

Base: People from your ethnic group portrayed accurately in ads -Broadly no



<sup>8</sup> Lloyds Banking Group: Reflecting Modern Britain? A study into inclusion and diversity in advertising (Study conducted by COG Research) <https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/assets/pdfs/who-we-are/responsible-business/inclusion-and-diversity/modern-britain-5.12-single-pages.pdf>

Lloyds Banking Group: Ethnicity in Advertising – Reflecting Modern Britain in 2018 (Study conducted by COG Research) [https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/assets/pdfs/who-we-are/responsible-business/inclusion-and-diversity/lloyds\\_banking\\_group-ethnicity\\_in\\_advertising.pdf](https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/assets/pdfs/who-we-are/responsible-business/inclusion-and-diversity/lloyds_banking_group-ethnicity_in_advertising.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Lloyds Banking Group: Championing Modern Britain 2021 – A guide to delivering positive representations of ethnicity in marketing communications [https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/assets/pdfs/who-we-are/responsible-business/inclusion-and-diversity/championing\\_modern\\_britain\\_lloyds\\_banking\\_group.pdf](https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/assets/pdfs/who-we-are/responsible-business/inclusion-and-diversity/championing_modern_britain_lloyds_banking_group.pdf)

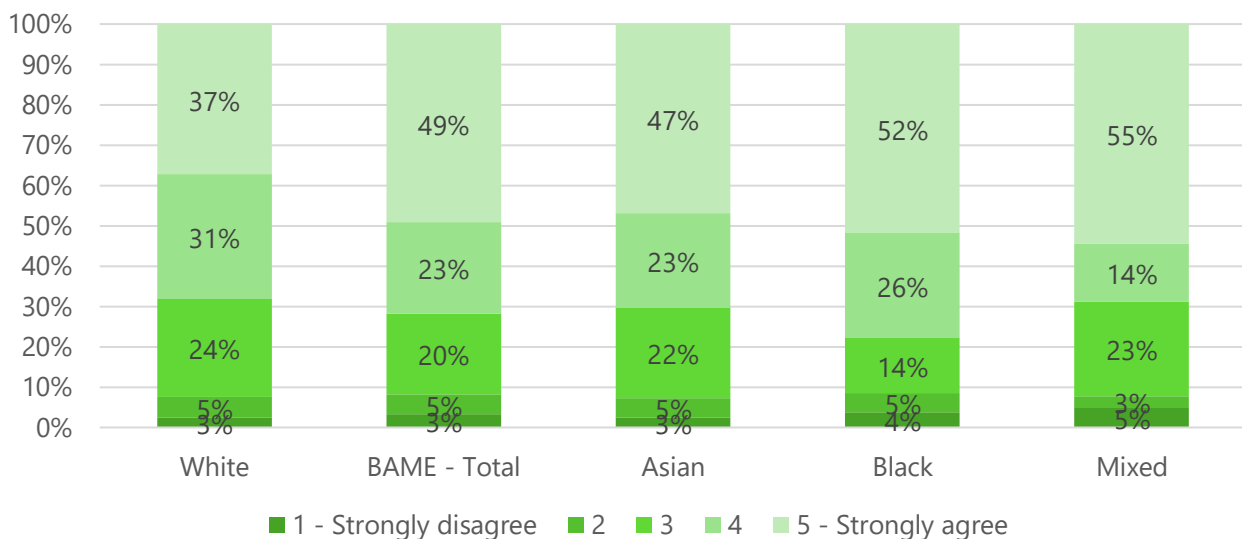
Responses to the level of agreement with the statement, showed a clear pattern. While half of the White sample (49%) ‘strongly’ or ‘tend to agree’, and the most common response among White respondents (37%) is a mid-point ‘neither agree nor disagree’ response, significant majorities from the BAME sample (72%) agree, with particularly strong positive reaction from the Mixed (53% *strongly agree*) and Black (52% *strongly agree*) respondents. This is again in line with what we saw in the qualitative study where concerns about representation and being seen were particularly strongly felt in those groups.

We asked those respondents who felt their ethnic group was accurately portrayed, how they felt about portrayal of *other* ethnic groups in advertising, and Figure 16 below shows agreement with the statement ‘*It’s nice to see people from other ethnic groups in adverts*’.

Figure 16

Thinking about people from other ethnic groups, to what extent do you think: It’s nice to see people from other ethnic groups in adverts

Base: People from your ethnic group portrayed accurately in ads -Broadly yes



Two things are clear from this data. While the White respondents were not as positive as BAME respondents about seeing people from *their* ethnic group in ads, with 26% strongly agreeing and the largest share (37%) showing indifference, when we asked them about it being ‘*nice to see people from other ethnic groups in ads*’ the figure jumped to 37% strongly agreeing, with overall agreement at 68%. The second significant point is that the higher levels of agreement among the BAME sample with the statement, ‘*It’s nice to see people from my ethnic group in ads*’ is carried forward with almost identical, or even higher, levels of agreement when members of each group think about seeing other ethnic groups in ads.



In the qualitative research, it was already clear that for most people from all groups there was an expectation that advertising in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain should be and would be multi-cultural and multi-ethnic, and that this was an obvious point that hardly needed stating. The answers to these questions demonstrate that these attitudes are widely shared among both the White respondents and among the different groups within the broader BAME sample.

“You just think in Britain today the ads will show all sorts of people, all of us: not just a tick box or a stereotype but real people. After all we are the customers now.”

Mixed, Female 22–30, South West

In addition, given the commercial function of advertising, it was felt that representation and portrayal of different groups was seen as an economic endorsement, recognising groups are worth targeting and an important part of society.

“Burberry chose to show Black people in the ad, that was strong – showing that they want us and that Black people buy an expensive brand. Normally you never see a Black or Brown person buying an expensive car.”

Black, Male 22–30, London SE

These quotes illustrate a wider point that emerged in the qualitative discussions. While other areas of public life like politics or media might be more influential in how people see each other and themselves, given its commercial function, advertising has an important role in holding a mirror up to and showing *normal people* as its main job, so there is a particular expectation that advertising is representative.

There was a suggestion that on the one hand news and current affairs showed elite leaders; an ‘outside world – not our world’ or just ‘bad news’. On the other hand, sport and entertainment featured stand out individuals who are important role models – but often described as ‘*not like us*’.

“Ads are about us, about normal life: it is where you expect to see people like you.”

Black, Male 22–30, London SE

This suggests that there are, in some ways, higher expectations for advertising than other areas of life in terms of how race and ethnicity are represented and portrayed. Quantitative evidence of this is shown in section 3.8.

### 3.8 The influence of ads featuring ethnic groups

One of the key objectives of the research was:

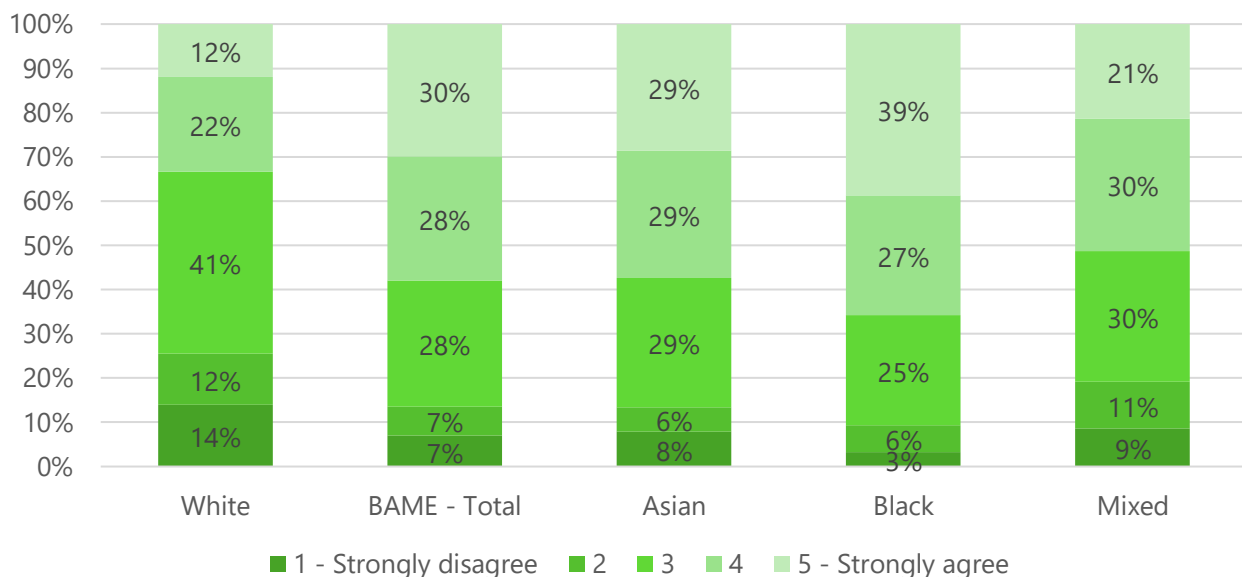
To understand how, if at all, such ads may impact on public attitudes and actions, for example, whether such stereotypes could limit how an individual, on the basis of race or ethnicity, views themselves or others, and influence individuals in how they behave towards others from a particular group.

While advertising may not be as important as other public spaces as an influence on **how we see ourselves and, how others see us**, it is seen as having an impact. When looking specifically at the influence of ads featuring people from different ethnic groups, the study clearly demonstrated that BAME respondents were significantly more likely to feel **adverts showing people from their ethnic group are likely to impact on how society sees them (and how they see themselves)**.

The results of questions exploring this are shown below.

Figure 17

To what extent do you think: Adverts that show people from my ethnic group impact how people in society see me or what they think about me

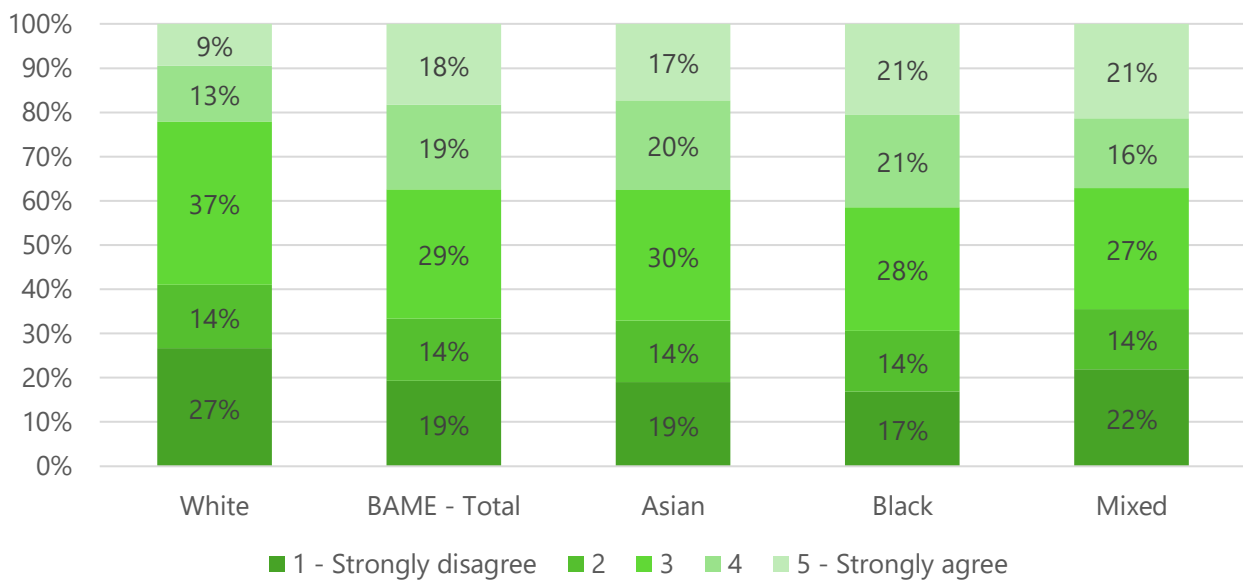


The idea that ‘*Adverts that show people from my ethnic group impact how people in society see me or what they think about me*’ (Figure 17) is a widely held view among BAME respondents (58% agree) – rising to 66% among Black respondents – and is significantly more strongly felt than among White respondents (33% agree).

Equally when we ask about impact on ourselves (Figure 18), people from BAME groups (18%) are twice as likely to strongly agree that ads featuring ‘*my ethnic group*’ have an impact as White respondents (9%). Overall, 38% of BAME respondents agree with the statement.

Figure 18

To what extent do you think: Adverts that show people from my ethnic group impact how I see myself



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## 4 Focus on harm

### Summary

From the qualitative phase of the research, we initially identified three broad areas in which participants believed ads had the potential to create harm:

- reinforcement of *existing* stereotypes;
- creating *new* tropes or stereotypes; and
- perpetuating or reinforcing racist attitudes and behaviours.

In the quantitative study these learnings were developed further by looking at ten specific elements of characterisation or storytelling in ads that could give rise to potential harm or offence.

The findings of this exercise showed that around a third of respondents felt that all ten elements, including *humour at the expense of ethnic groups* and *showing ethnic groups as outsiders*, could *cause upset or anger*.

There was greater variance in responses when looking at whether these elements could *cause harm*, with half of all respondents saying that *discrimination towards particular ethnic groups* or *showing ethnic groups in a degrading way* could have this effect. This was followed by elements *showing ethnic groups as outsiders* and the *sexualisation of ethnic groups*.

As well as mapping the key factors for potential harm or offence, through discussions on a range of ad creatives, we learnt a great deal about the executional factors that contributed to ads that were either seen as doing a good job of representation and inclusion or a poor job.

### Focus on harm – qualitative findings

In the qualitative research many respondents were clearly able to articulate the types of potential harms that could arise from poor portrayal of issues surrounding race and ethnicity. We have grouped these into three broad themes that are analysed in detail in the following sections:

- Harm 1: reinforcing *existing* stereotypes;
- Harm 2: creating *new* tropes or stereotypes;
- Harm 3: perpetuating or reinforcing racist attitudes and behaviours.

## 4.1 Harm 1: Reinforcing *existing* stereotypes

This was the most common theme that emerged in discussions and was often characterised as ‘always showing us in the same way’. Examples that frequently emerged were the casting or portrayal of Asian men as shopkeepers, taxi drivers and salesmen, and Asian women as in the kitchen or wearing a sari. Equally Black actors were often chosen for roles portraying sporting or musical roles, or in some comedy role.

Perhaps more importantly, our respondents observed that BAME actors were less often shown as the ‘boss’, the leader or in a position of power, or even as the customer, so there was a subtle reinforcement of a servile role.

“The waiter, the shopkeeper, never the customer.”

Asian, Female 22–30, Mids

A number of the ads shown to the groups were seen as telling stories or featuring characterisations that fell into this category, and other similar examples were recalled in groups once discussion had started. Some respondents felt this reinforcement was a lesser harm than failing to represent their communities at all, and within some of the Asian and Black groups we heard comments like:

“It may be a stereotype, but at least we are actually being shown, which is some progress.”

Asian, Male 60 plus, North

However, this resigned view was more commonly expressed by older respondents from the Black and Asian samples, while younger respondents from all samples were much more frustrated by the perceived reinforcement of familiar roles and stereotypes, as shown in some of the comments below.

“We are still being shown as taxi drivers, doctors.”

Asian, Male 31–44, Scotland

“We are the employee not the boss.”

Black, Male 45–60, Mids

“The footballer, the clown, not the businessman.”

Black, Male 45–60, Mids

These examples illustrate a widely held view that whilst advertising may be featuring people from BAME communities, the portrayal often featured stereotypical representations of their appearance, job/role and characterisations such as behaviour, accent, tastes or preferences, which simply served to reinforce existing beliefs about them in the wider White community.

It was clear that participants believed that these aspects of roles and characters were also important to the *reinforcement* of stereotypes. For example, there was a sense that the way people were being shown as being dressed was itself a stereotype.

“Black people in crazy colourful clothes, mad hair (I could never go to work like that), Asians in boring suits, saris, hijabs, it is all just lazy clichés and not how the people around here actually look.”  
Black, Female 16–21, North

The harm that this reinforcement of stereotypes was seen as doing was in **making it easier for others to see people from racial and ethnic minorities as different to the mainstream** (‘othering’), and this was a theme that came up across the groups. By caricaturing groups and using quick and clichéd representations it helped reinforce the idea that ‘Asians’ or ‘Black people’ are a certain way, rather than communicating their individuality and humanity.

This perception of caricature and cliché often became clearer when we looked at ads that participants felt *did not* use stereotypes: for example, an NHS ad on Organ Donation was widely praised because of its focus on an individual who happened to be Asian, and was talking about his father and family (who were also Asian) in a way that had little to do with their origin, race or ethnicity, and instead focused on telling a human story.

“He is Asian, his dad too, but that doesn’t matter, it is about the people – there is no stereotype or cliché there and it makes you want to watch.”  
Asian, Male 31– 44, Scotland

The concern is **not just about how others see us; it also has an effect on self-perception**. The harm that is seen to be arising here from reinforcing stereotypes is in creating a limiting set of perceptions and beliefs around what is expected from people from the BAME communities. Respondents often reported that it was not just how they felt others saw them as a result of repeated use of stereotypes, it was also the effect they noticed on how they and their family and friends saw themselves.

Some examples of this are shown in the comments below.

“If they keep showing us as one thing, young people get stuck in that, and employers see us that way too.”  
Asian, Female 22–30, Mids

“The ad showing Brown and other people says to me ‘they will look at me, I won’t be rejected’ because so often you expect to be at a disadvantage.”

Asian, Female 31–44, London SE

“You know other people are seeing you that way, it just seeps in.”

Mixed, Female 22–30, South West

“When a job ad shows Black, Brown people you feel ‘I will be at least looked at’ because you know you are often not considered.”

Black, Male 22–30, London SE

These comments are representative of much of what we heard in the qualitative research, not only in terms of the stereotyping that many people feel ads can display, but also the importance of how people are represented, in allowing people to feel they are ‘seen’ and recognised as a part of society as a whole. This reveals the tension between a desire for more ads featuring people from different racial or ethnic minority backgrounds (and the underlying sense that most ads still don’t feature people from these backgrounds), and the desire for ads that show people from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds in non-stereotypical roles.

A good example of this referred to above was the NHS Organ Donation ad, which Asian and other respondents felt was both authentic to the protagonist’s family story and went beyond that to a universal message about letting family know what your wishes about donation were.

“He is Asian, the family is, but that is all beside the point. It is not about them being different because of their Asian-ness, it is about them being the same as anyone, so it applies to everyone.”

Asian, Female 22–30, Mids

## 4.2 Harm 2: Creating *new* tropes or stereotypes

During discussions on the way that BAME people are now shown in ads, participants spoke of a **sense that a one-dimensional picture is being created**. Some examples of this were the way in which the following are depicted: family life and relationships; appearance and, in particular, the skin colour of the people cast in ads; and the way that BAME people are integrated (or not) within an ad. This was seen to have the **potential to create a new set of limiting perceptions** – as seen with Harm 1 – of people from BAME communities.

One concern raised related to the depiction of family life and relationships, with ads often featuring one BAME person, perhaps in a relationship with a White person. While there was

support for the depiction of integrated relationships, there was frustration that this had become a new norm or stereotype in ads. The Sainsbury's Christmas ad<sup>10</sup> was often commented on as an outlier in showing a Black family, and the apparent public criticism against that was noted.

"It makes you feel like they don't actually want to see Black families – and look at the backlash when they did (Sainsbury's Christmas Ad)."

Black, Male 22–30, London SE

"What about Black couples – it would be nice to see some of those because that is the reality for most of us."

Black, Female 31–44, Scotland

Another concern raised was about the skin tone of characters depicted. This was voiced in the Black and Asian groups, where there was a feeling that lighter skinned people were often cast, and this was being represented as the norm.

"It would be nice to see darker skinned Brown and Black people but you just do not see people looking like me in the ads."

Male, Asian 31–44, Scotland

The depiction of natural hair was also a source of frustration, as Black women were often shown with natural hair, but this was seen as at odds with how most Black women felt their hair had to look professional for their workplace. This was a common complaint among Black women in the groups.

"The women in the ads have great hair, but no way can I go to work like that. How about some women looking professional?"

Black, Female 16–21, North

For some, the use of the hijab had become a new trope, as a way of signalling inclusion in an ad without really taking the trouble to create credible or authentic characters. Although showing women wearing the hijab was viewed to be acceptable, it was also seen as an easy stereotype rather than coming out of the character being portrayed.

"You see a girl in hijab as part of a collage, with other people, and it looks as if they just put her in there to tick a box – it doesn't make any sense."

Asian, Female 31–44, London SE

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<sup>10</sup> UK supermarket chain, Sainsbury's, received criticism from some customers in reaction to its Christmas 2020 'Gravy Song' ad featuring a Black family. See coverage: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/28/uk-supermarkets-unite-after-sainsburys-advert-prompts-racist-backlash>



Participants also felt, that on occasion, the BAME character did not demonstrate a credible personality, but was rather devoid of individuality – suggesting the character was more likely to represent a stereotype or even tick a box. For example, a Gala Bingo ad featuring two Black characters (see Section 5), was seen to be showing two 'personalities' that were far-fetched and not likely to be identified with. Participants found it easier to cite examples of good practice that were positively commented on, such as the depiction of the participants in the Burberry 'Singing in the Rain' ad or the family in the Sainsbury's Christmas ad. These were positively commented on as showing relatable personalities who were 'like them' and showed different representations of how people look that were closer to reality and this was seen as a desirable thing.

These examples perhaps help explain the difference between Harm 1 and Harm 2. The former is centred in using existing stereotypes that were seen to be widely present in culture to make advertising points (liking basketball, being shopkeepers) while Harm 2 is creating new cultural ideas or using them in a way that results in stereotypical portrayal. The issue of professional hair or hijab wearing is relatively new (though not unknown) and the portrayal of it in advertising helps to normalise it as an idea. By contrast Harm 1 is about repeating already strongly rooted notions and helping to perpetuate them. This will have an element of crossover as elements of Harm 2 become more widely used and potentially become an element of Harm 1.

### 4.3 Harm 3: Perpetuating or reinforcing racist attitudes and behaviours

This was the most troubling theme for many people in the focus groups, and created the strongest reactions. In some cases, there were ads we looked at that showed perceived racist behaviours, and these were strongly objected to by respondents from all backgrounds. However, we also saw that **many White as well as BAME participants were troubled by ads that they felt represented racist or prejudiced behaviour even though it was apparent that the advertiser's intent was to use such depiction as a means to challenge its negative effects.**

There were two types of reactions to this, with some respondents being genuinely surprised that such attitudes were being presented as an issue in 2021, while others recognised the attitudes as representative of their and their families' lived experiences, but still felt that it was not appropriate for advertising to give attention to such attitudes within a commercial. This was made apparent by feedback on a Ministry of Defence Army Recruitment ad where the main Black/Mixed race character was subject to negative comments and abuse from White co-workers in a supermarket but was then seen in a military context as calm and in control.

"I don't know why they made this ad – does anyone think like this today?"

White, Male 16–21, Northern Ireland

“The girl is being bullied; it is horrible to show that even if they think there is a story there. They should never make and show an ad like this.”

Mixed Female, 22–30, South West

The underlying concern here was that by portraying such behaviour and attitudes, there was some **implicit reinforcement of the prevalence of these attitudes** both among those who might still hold them, and also among the wider community. Moreover, it was **a very painful reminder of the reality of racism that many BAME respondents experience but try not to be affected by on a daily basis**. Showing these ads in the groups was a cathartic moment as it allowed or legitimised discussion about a topic that had been avoided even within the safe space of these groups until this point.

“It is so wrong to be showing that – we feel for her, being bullied by two White people, but what kind of message does it send. I know the idea is she has risen above it, but honestly what are they thinking? How do they think we feel at being looked down on every day, or wondering what people are thinking and saying?”

Black, Male 22–30, London SE

Another ad that provoked strong reactions was the Home Office anti-knife crime ad, where a young Black/Mixed race man is shown with a football against the backdrop of a council housing estate, with the headline ‘#knifefree since 16.01.07’. While the ad copy reads as, ‘Carrying a knife almost cost Sonny his football ambitions. That’s why he joined millions of young people living knife free’, suggesting the character had made changes in his life, the immediate take out was a negative one for many respondents.

“Why just put a Black, Mixed kid with a football and a headline about knife crime – what do they expect most people will take away from that?”

Black, Male 22–30, London SE

The concern that underlies participants’ reaction to these and other ads is that, despite the intention of advertisers to challenge negative stereotypes within the messaging of an ad, the inclusion of these portrayals still has the potential to reinforce these stereotypes. Participants felt that many people already have some unconscious prejudices, and **it is easy for ambiguous messaging and portrayal in advertising to unintentionally reinforce this**. Clearly, ads that consciously reinforce prejudice or racism are viewed as wrong and are widely rejected, but the reactions we saw were often very strongly expressed when we looked at these ambiguous depictions.

#### 4.4 Harm and offence: Quantitative findings

Using the three strands of harm identified in the qualitative research as the prompt for further inquiry, we proceeded to the quantitative research with the intention of measuring the level of concern that a wider sample had about how various elements of an ad might generate upset or harm amongst different racial and ethnic groups. This next section reviews the findings of those questions.

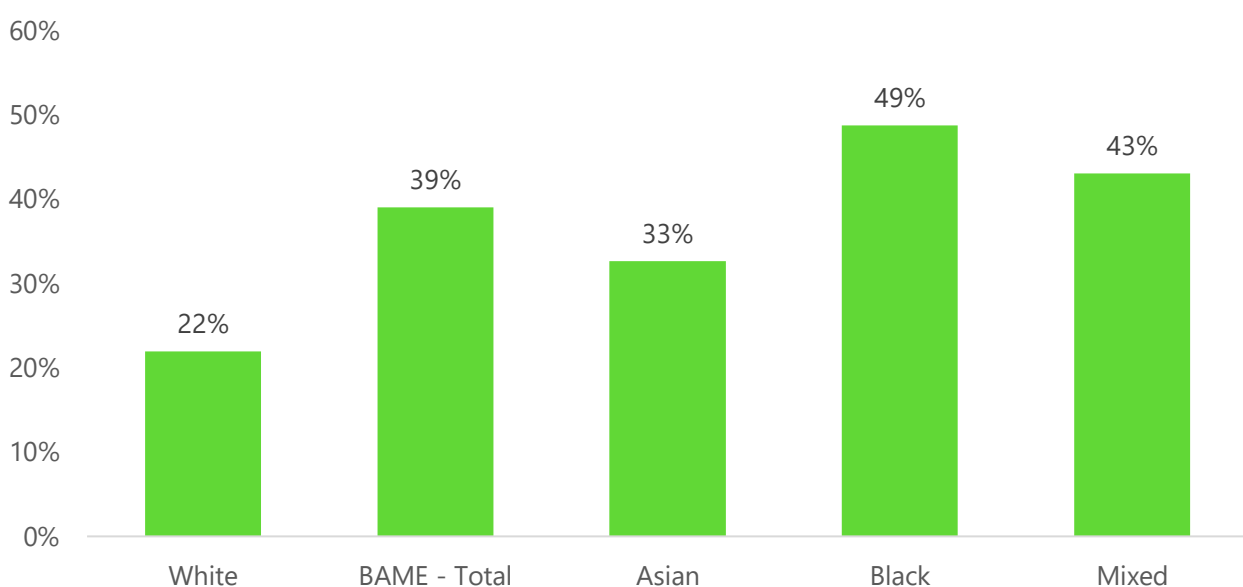
The questions in this section of the survey were prefaced with an explanation of what we meant by harm or offence. The wording used was:

- **Offence:** *When we talk about offence, we mean things that might be upsetting, hurtful or insulting.*
- **Harm:** *When we talk about harm, we mean things that could cause social, moral, mental or physical damage.*

We first looked at whether respondents could recall seeing any ads featuring people from ethnic groups that they had found offensive.

Figure 19

Have you recently seen or heard any advertising featuring people from ethnic minorities that was offensive to you? - Yes

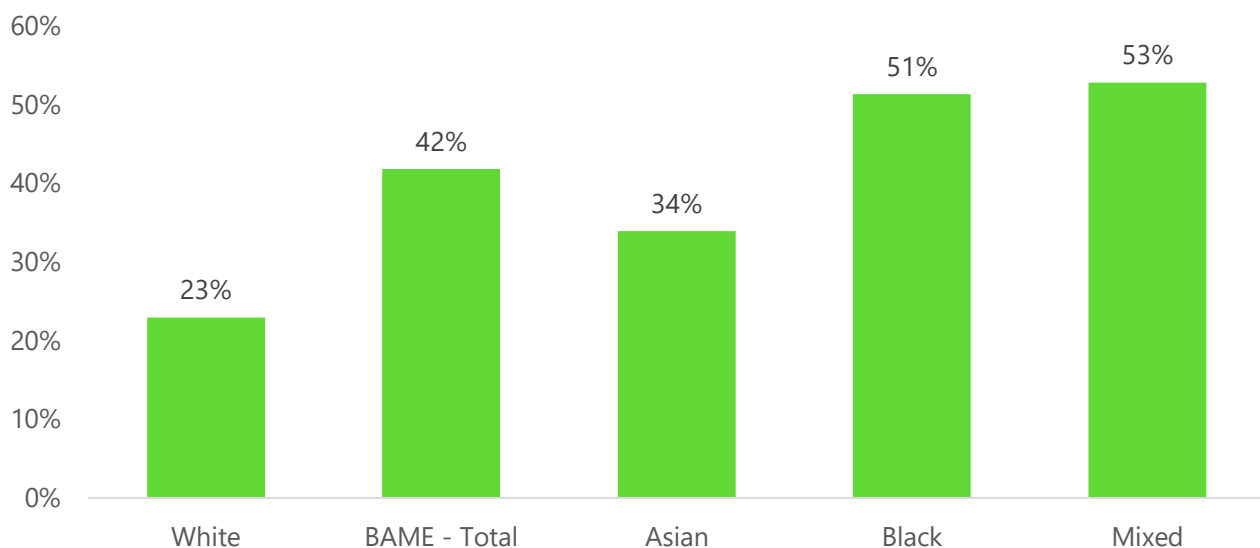


As shown in Figure 19, BAME respondents (39%) were more likely to recall seeing an ad featuring people from an ethnic minority that was offensive to them than White respondents (22%), with Black respondents (49%) feeling most strongly. Younger people were also more likely to say ‘Yes’ with 35% of under 35-year-olds agreeing (rising to 44% of under 35-year-old BAME respondents) compared with 19% of those aged 35 and over (30% of BAME respondents aged 35 or over said ‘Yes’).

When we look at the scores for the question asking if they had seen advertising featuring people from ethnic minorities that might be offensive to *others*, we see the following:

Figure 20

Have you recently seen or heard any advertising featuring people from ethnic minorities you think might be offensive to others? - Yes



The pattern of responses is very similar with the proportion saying ‘Yes’ to seeing ads that might be *offensive to others* highest among Mixed (53%) and Black (51%) respondents. Again, we see a clear pattern related to age where 40% of all those under-35 years of age agreed compared with 18% of those aged 35 and older.

Given what we had learnt from the qualitative research, we asked the quantitative sample the following question, which was designed to help us further understand specific elements of storytelling and characterisation in ads that might be seen as offensive or causing harm.

*Sometimes adverts might make people feel upset or angry or may cause harm. Thinking about adverts featuring people from different ethnic groups, which of these do you think could cause this type of reaction?*

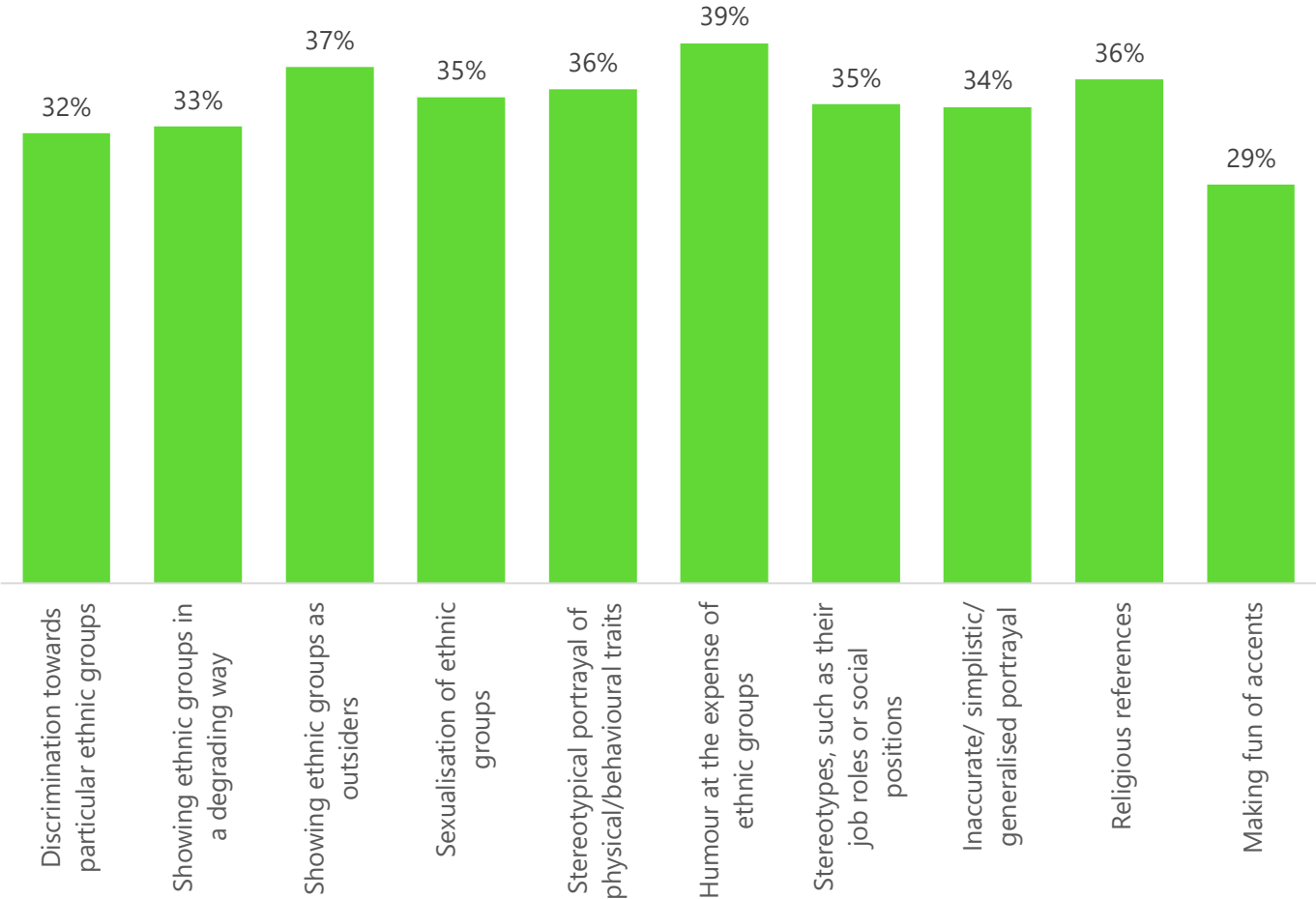
Respondents were asked to categorise various elements as: *causes harm*, *causes upset or anger*; *just irritating*; or, *no effect*.

Potential to cause offence

Looking at the results for the elements of an ad that may *cause upset or anger* (defined as offence in this study), we found that around a third of all respondents felt that all ten features could have that effect (Figure 21). The element most likely to cause upset or anger was the use of *humour at the expense of ethnic groups* (39%), followed by *showing ethnic groups as outsiders* (37%).

Figure 21

Thinking about adverts featuring people from different ethnic groups, which of these do you think could cause this type of reaction?: Causes upset or anger

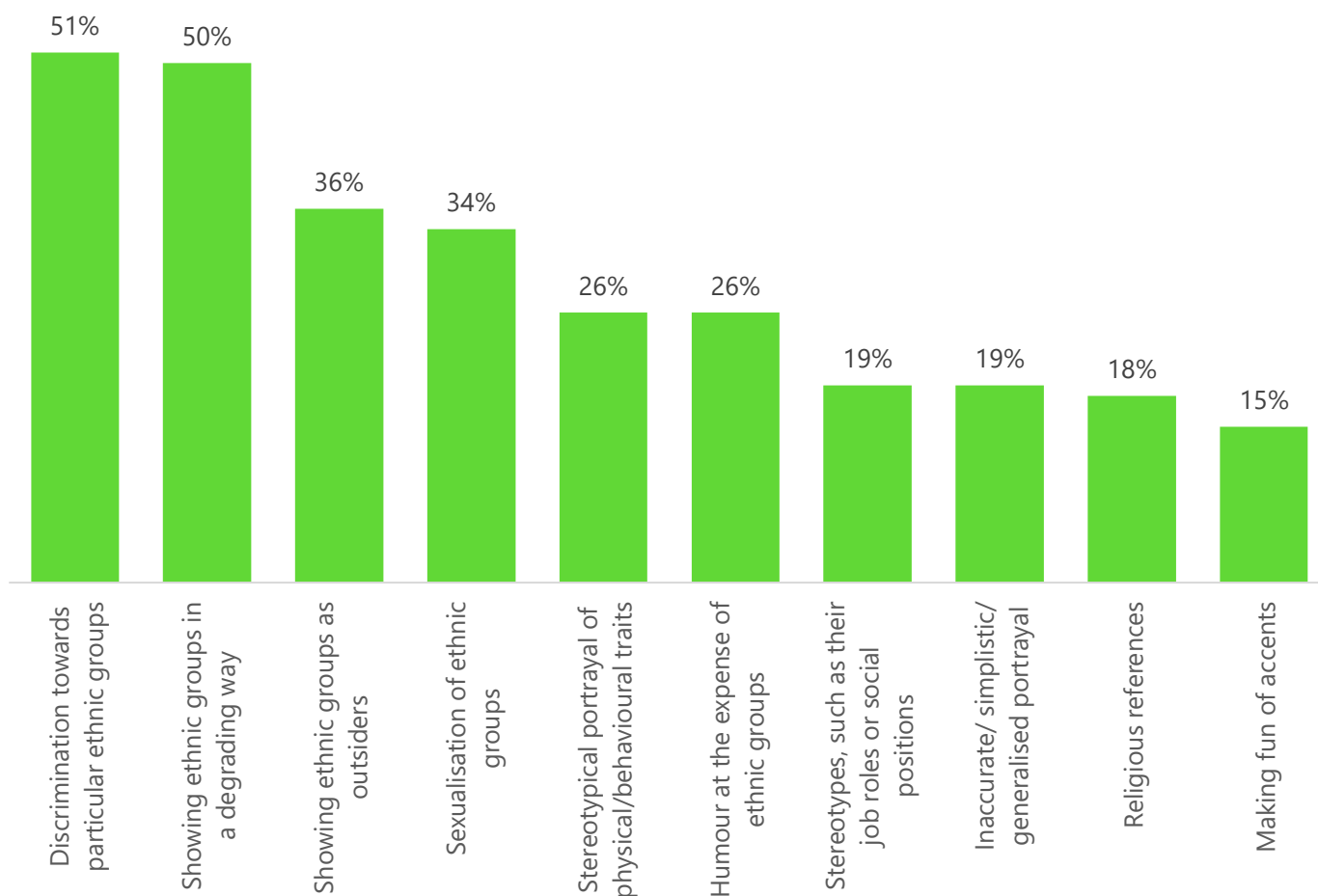


## Potential to cause harm

In Figure 22, we see the proportion of all respondents suggesting each theme has the potential to *cause harm*:

Figure 22

Thinking about adverts featuring people from different ethnic groups, which of these do you think could cause this type of reaction? : Causes harm



Compared with the results for *causing upset or anger*, there is greater variance between responses to the different elements that may *cause harm*. This highlights the effect some of these elements may have and the clear distinctions respondents were able to make between their impact.

Half the sample stated that *portrayal of discrimination toward particular ethnic groups* (51%) and *showing ethnic groups in a degrading way* (50%) risked causing harm. It is worth noting that these views are just as strongly held among the White as the BAME sample, and that they are common across all age groups.

This strongly reinforces the findings from the qualitative research, where we saw that *Harm 3: perpetuating or reinforcing racist attitudes and behaviours*, was a particularly problematic issue for the respondents. In the quantitative stage, without even the benefit of showing some of the ads that evoked these feelings, we can clearly see that the portrayal of discrimination and degrading depiction are judged by half of all respondents to be specifically harmful.

Other sources of harm that are commonly cited include *showing ethnic groups as outsiders* (36%), *sexualisation of ethnic groups* (34%), *stereotypical portrayal of physical/behavioural traits* (26%) and *humour at the expense of ethnic groups* (26%). While these are seen as actively harmful at a lower level than the first two categories, we still see between a third and a quarter of the sample citing each one as potentially harmful.

It is helpful to consider this in the light of the preceding sections where we discuss the three areas of harm that were identified in the qualitative research. Clearly, *Harm 3: perpetuating or reinforcing racist attitudes and behaviours*, fits with the two strongest responses in the chart above. The *reinforcement of stereotypes* (Harm 1) and the *creation of new tropes or stereotypes* (Harm 2) fit with some of the other areas that evoked strong reaction in the quantitative research, and help validate it. It also elaborates on specific elements where harm can be caused, such as *sexualisation of ethnic groups* and *stereotypical portrayal of physical/behavioural traits*.

It is useful to examine the data by other demographics. What we see when we look at some of the most contentious areas by age is that responses are somewhat stronger among the under-35s. So, to take the example of *showing discrimination towards particular groups*, we see 56% of under-35s say it could cause harm compared with 49% of respondents aged 35 or over.

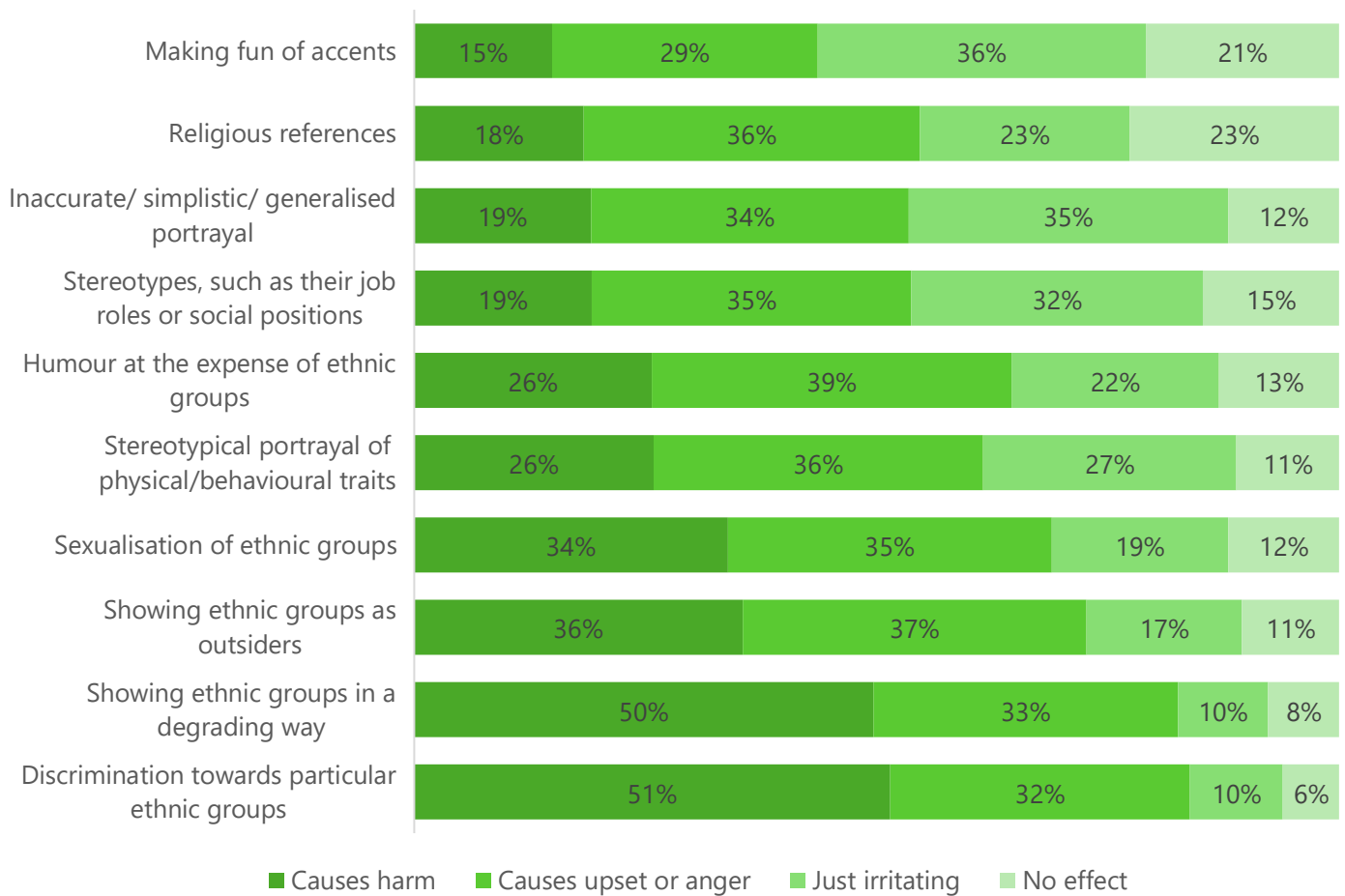
What is perhaps more surprising is that there is little difference between the figures for BAME and White respondents, with 55% and 51% respectively agreeing that showing discrimination causes harm. What the data shows is there is a real consensus in society with all groups agreeing, to relatively similar levels, that this type of portrayal is harmful.

### Mapping the territory between upset and harm

The question allowed four responses, with *causes harm* or *causes upset or anger* as the strongest responses, and *just irritating* as a less serious effect, as well as *no effect*. In Figure 23 we see the breakdown for all responses and it becomes clear that there is a strong push back against many of these issues in advertising with few people thinking such portrayals have no effect.

Figure 23

Thinking about adverts featuring people from different ethnic groups, which of these do you think could cause this type of reaction?



When we add in the figures for *causes upset or anger* to the responses for *causes harm*, we can see that almost every element we asked about has a net negative effect that goes beyond just being irritating. The only element which less than half the respondents feel could *cause harm or upset or anger* is *making fun of accents* (44%). Of course, if we add in the scores for being irritating, we see that around four-fifths of the sample find *all* the elements troubling to some degree.

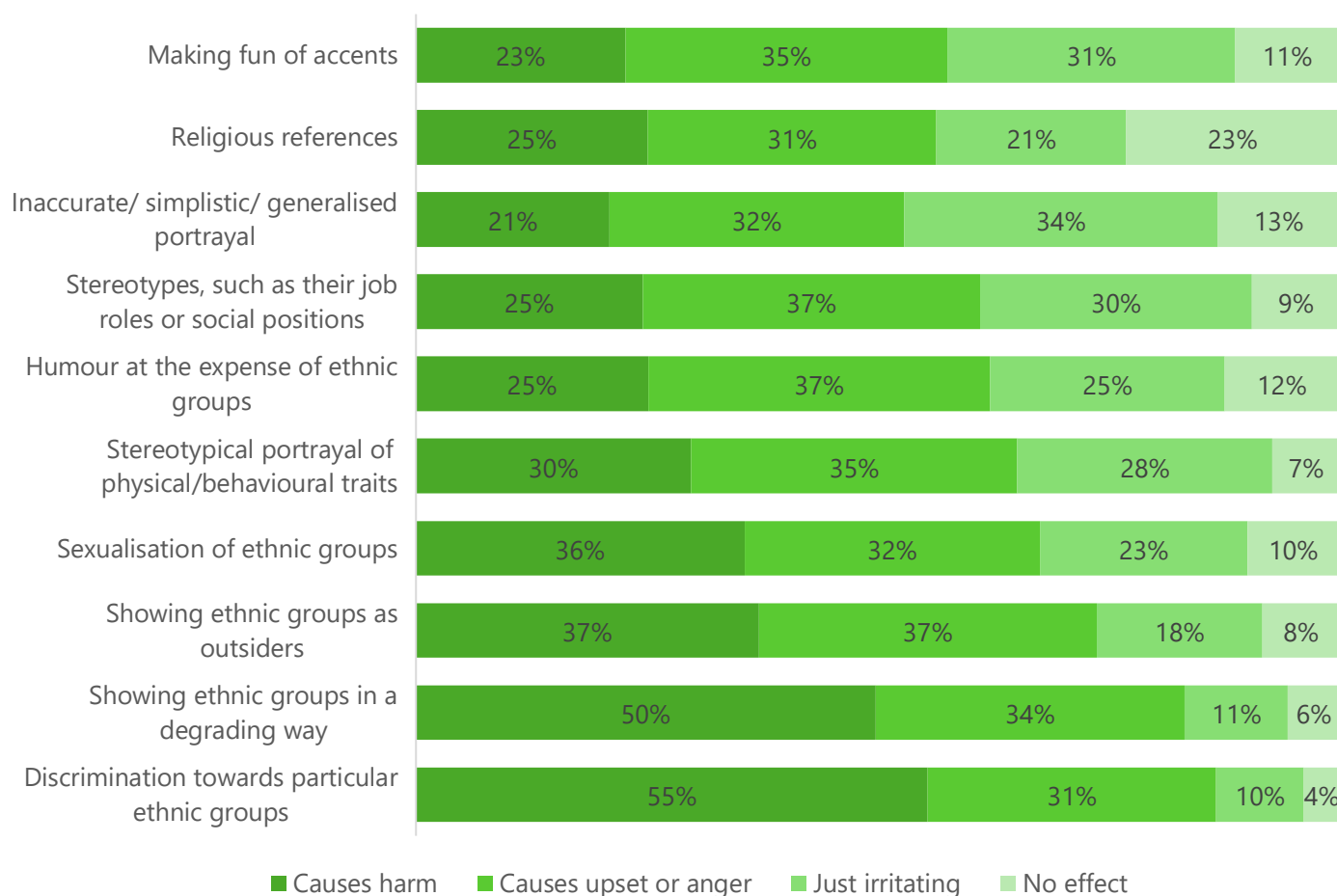
In terms of looking at the issues of harm and offence from the perspective of racial and ethnic minority groups, Figure 24 shows that the results for BAME respondents are similar to those for the whole of the UK population.



Figure 24

Thinking about adverts featuring people from different ethnic groups, which of these do you think could cause this type of reaction?

Base: BAME - Total



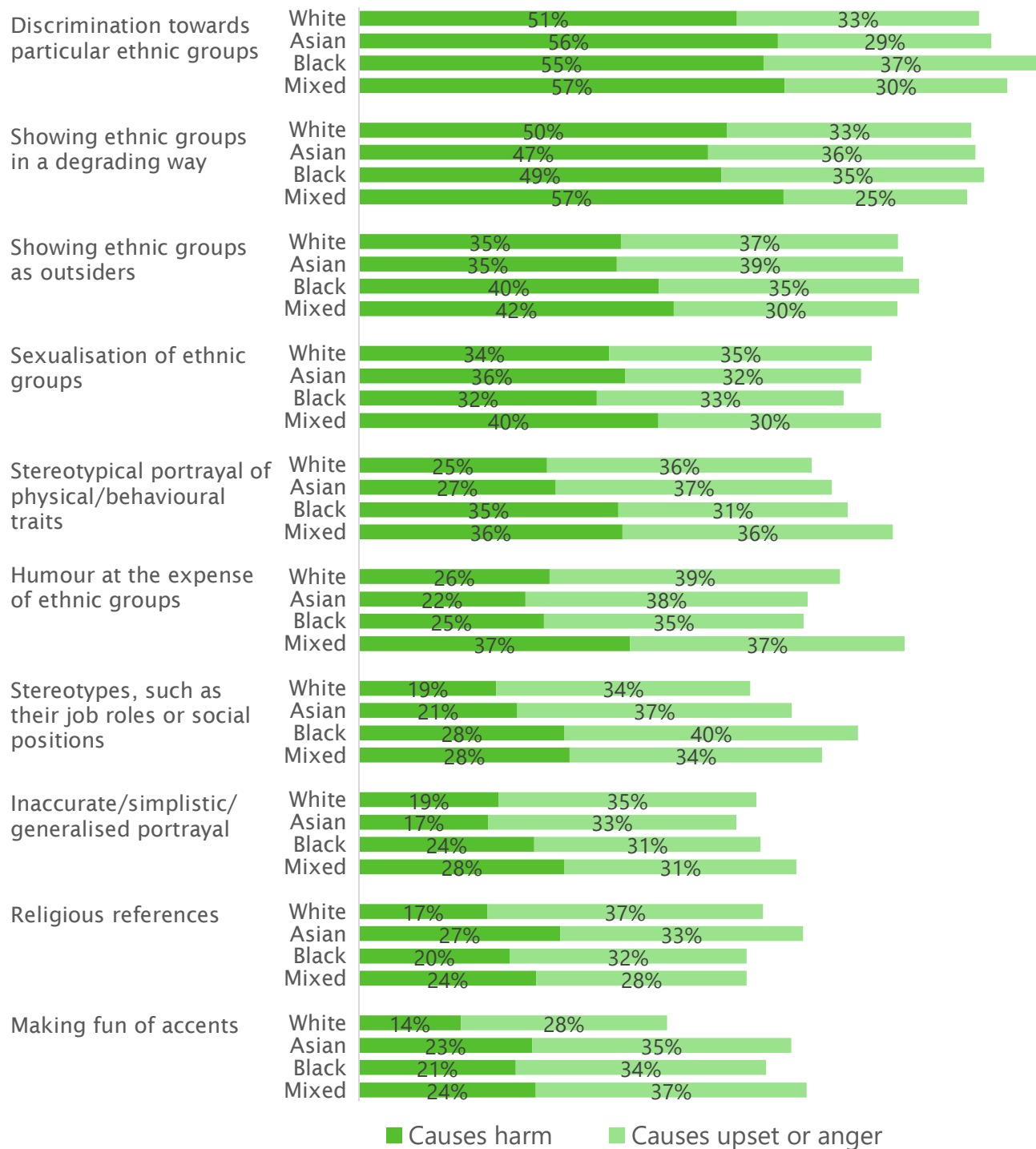
There are two significant differences between the results of the whole sample and those of the BAME respondents. The first is the higher proportion of BAME respondents saying *making fun of accents* could *cause harm* (23%) – compared with 15% across all respondents – and so taking results for *causes harm* or *causes upset or anger* together, for BAME respondents all elements have a net negative effect. Secondly, BAME respondents were more likely to say *religious references* were likely to cause harm – 25% versus 18% of all respondents- which is unsurprising given the earlier results on the level of importance BAME respondents place on religion as part of their identity.

Figure 25 looks at the responses of individual groups to the same question. While there are some differences, as set out above, between White and BAME respondents, it is important to note that, in most cases, views are as strongly felt across the population. Similar findings were reported in

the *Feeling Seen*<sup>11</sup> research, which found very little difference in the emotional responses, between various ‘diversity segments’ and the ‘control group’, to a range of ads tested.

Figure 25

Thinking about adverts featuring people from different ethnic groups, which of these do you think could cause this type of reaction?



<sup>11</sup> ITV/System1Group/DECA Diversity Media Consultancy: Feeling Seen: How diverse advertising unites us <https://www.itvmedia.co.uk/itv-backing-business/feeling-seen-how-diverse-advertising-unites-us>



### Ads which received positive feedback across the groups

Some ads were much more positively received across the board. An example of this was the previously mentioned NHS ad for Organ Donation (seen at top left of Figure 26) and an ad for TSB (seen below it) which shows an Asian woman, wearing a hijab, working from home – a situation many were able to relate to during the pandemic. It is useful to review why they were positively received.

Both featured Asian protagonists, and both focused on one individual. More importantly both clearly showed people of Asian origin, behaving in natural and credible, but not stereotypical ways. The NHS ad showed a young Asian man reflecting on his father's failure to let his family know his point of view on organ donation. Its strength was its emotive portrayal of family life, but in a way that was not focused on the race or ethnicity of the protagonists.

“They are Asian, but it could literally be anyone in the ad – it is not a stereotype.”

Asian, Male 31–44, Scotland

“Just a normal family, relate-able to anyone – not making them weird.”

Asian, Female 22–30, Mids

### Ads that were viewed as problematic across the groups

Some of the ads that received the most negative reaction (shown on the right of Figure 26) are clear examples of *degrading depiction* or *portraying discrimination*. At the top right of the visual is a HM Government NHS awareness ad for Covid-19 that shows a black woman breathing out Covid particles. This was widely seen as degrading and an example of racial/ethnic stereotyping, as was the ad below it for Lings Cars, which was also seen as an example of sexualisation and objectification. The ad for the fragrance Gypsy Water, (bottom right) was seen as offensive appropriation by the Traveller respondents.

Other ads that created a sense of degrading depiction or portraying discrimination were the Home Office anti-knife crime and Army Recruitment ads previously referred to, along with an ad for Badoo dating. This ad, which featured various hashtags showing the interests of individuals from different racial/ethnic groups (such as #Bollywood for the Asian girl), was often criticised for its stereotypical portrayal.

Clearly some ads were seen as portraying or encouraging discrimination, while others featured obvious stereotypes. The Childline ‘Think You Understand Me’ ad – which aimed to highlight the impact of stereotypical opinions of children from different backgrounds – and the Army Recruitment ad are good examples of ads that were seen as portraying behaviour which many people find unacceptable and indeed harmful in an ad. Their ‘good intentions’ were not enough to give them license to depict harmful or offensive behaviours.

### **Ads which received ambiguous or mixed reactions**

There are also useful learnings from participants’ mixed or ambiguous reactions to some of the ads. For example, there were more nuanced views towards an ad for Tilda Rice, compared to the ad for dating app Badoo. Both were reviewed in more detail in the quantitative research and are discussed in Section 5.

The qualitative group discussions looked to understand what set apart an ad like the one for Badoo from the ad for Tilda, where both seemed to be demonstrating stereotypes? And why would one ad for crisps featuring an Asian man be better received than one set in a barber or chicken shop?

The answer again lies in the sense of ‘freshness’ versus stereotyping. This means that some portrayals are introducing us to a new and individual character, who you recognise as having an individual personality, while other portrayals seem to rely on some easy and obvious associations. As someone said of the Walkers KFC ad which showed clips of a barber shop:

“It’s embarrassing – a barbers, a chicken shop – is that all they know about Black people?  
It’s not horrible, just obvious.” Black, Male 22–30, London SE

Meanwhile the Walkers ad featuring Guz Khan and the Spice Girls received a much more positive response, illustrating the point about introducing us to a distinct character:

“The guy with the Spice Girls – he’s Asian, a bit typical but not a stereotype – he loves the Spice Girls not bhangra. It’s different, a bit of fun.” Asian, Female 31–44, London SE

This talks to a much more general point, about authenticity and personality as opposed to stereotype and caricature. Just as people can (or think they can) spot ads made by men for housewives, which they feel talk down to them, so people often impute laziness and lack of interest to ads that seem to rely on obvious tropes and stereotypes.

“No way a Black person was involved in making that ad, apart from the actors. They have no understanding of us and are just using us to sell something.”

Mixed, Female 22–30, South West

“If a Brown or Black person was behind the ad you would know, it would be completely different. It is good there is work for Black actors but it is still reinforcing a stereotype, not changing anything.”

Asian, Female 31–44, London SE

“Take the TSB ad, she has a hijab but that is not the point – she knows what she is talking about and you listen. And the ad is obviously meant for everyone. Some ads just shove someone in a hijab to, what, keep us happy?”

Asian, Female 22–30, Mids

Sometimes it is the small things that make or break the representation in the ads, and result in them being either powerful communication vehicles or sources of frustration. The working from home, kitchen scene in the TSB ad was well done.

“Not typical *Muslim woman*, but actually how we live.”

Asian, Female 31–44, London SE

Meanwhile the living room, and the clothes and hair in the Gala Bingo ad (see Section 5 for more detail) were possibly accurate but still extremely stereotypical:

“I know some Black people dress like that, do crazy hair, the whole thing, but somehow it comes across as patronising. What are they trying to sell anyway?”

Black, Male 22–30, London SE

#### **4.6 How ads are received and understood: Context**

We also tested different examples from the same campaign. It is true that if the campaign with a series of ads were viewed as a whole, respondents may have reacted differently. However, we also know that audiences don’t necessarily consume ads as part of a campaign, nor should they be expected to.

For example, in the NHS Covid awareness campaign we saw different reactions to the TV ad which showed a range of people and behaviours compared with the press/outdoor ad which just showed a Black woman breathing particles on a White woman. The former TV ad was generally

liked. The latter outdoor ad was widely rejected by respondents. The fact that it might have been one scene from the TV ad did not give it license in consumers' eyes.

“They should have known better than to pick that shot – it is obvious people are going to find it really offensive. If it were the other way round it would be different in this country because we don't have a history of discrimination against Whites.”

White, Male 45–60, London SE

Also, for many there are different expectations and sensitivities around outdoor ads and digital and TV ads, although there is no real consensus. For some the experience of seeing an ad that involves a stereotype, or particularly sexualisation, in a public space like a tube station is particularly uncomfortable. For others there is a real dislike of seeing ads involving racist portrayal in the home, or on their personal screen.

“The pretty little thing ad, it's going to be awkward standing on a crowded platform as a Black woman with other people looking at that.”

Mixed, Female 22–30, South West

“I don't want stuff like that at home when I am home in the evening – that girl getting bullied – I don't expect it at work and I don't want it at home.”

Black, Female 60+, Mids

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## 5 Quantitative evaluation of ads

### Summary

Some of the ads that provoked the most negative responses in the qualitative research were clearly exemplifying showing racial or ethnic groups in a degrading way or demonstrating discrimination towards these groups. Based on participant views, some of these were so clear and unambiguous that we did not feel the need to test them further, but in other cases it was felt useful to get clearer readings from a wider sample of respondents. We therefore tested six ads in the quantitative research and the findings on each are reviewed in this section.

It is important to note that it is much more helpful to review actual examples of communication rather than discuss 'ads' in the abstract. The use of advertising materials was primarily intended to help understand the way in which viewers assign the potential for harm or offence to a range of ads, rather than any attempt to judge the ads. We introduced them in both the qualitative and quantitative research as aids to the discussion of wider themes, rather than asking people to provide feedback on the advertisers/brands involved or evaluate the effectiveness of the ads used.

The following sections set out the quantitative findings of the six ads tested in the survey, why we chose them and what lessons we learnt. They emphasised the findings from the previous section that harm was likely to arise when the following elements are depicted in ads:

- perceived racist behaviours or implications of racism;
- perceived sexualisation or objectification of a particular racial/ethnic group(s); and
- the mocking of a group's appearance or behaviour.

### 5.1 Tilda Rice

This TV ad shows, in an upbeat, quick-cut style, a range of rice dishes cooked by different racial and ethnic groups, tying it together with the message of the joy of cooking and eating. It was included in the quantitative test following some comments in the qualitative stage about whether it stereotyped either certain groups of people (e.g., the behaviours and roles shown) or certain cultures through the depiction of food. It was not seen as problematic, but there was some ambiguity about the fact that it mainly focused on women and BAME characters, and whether in some sense it was reinforcing existing stereotypes.

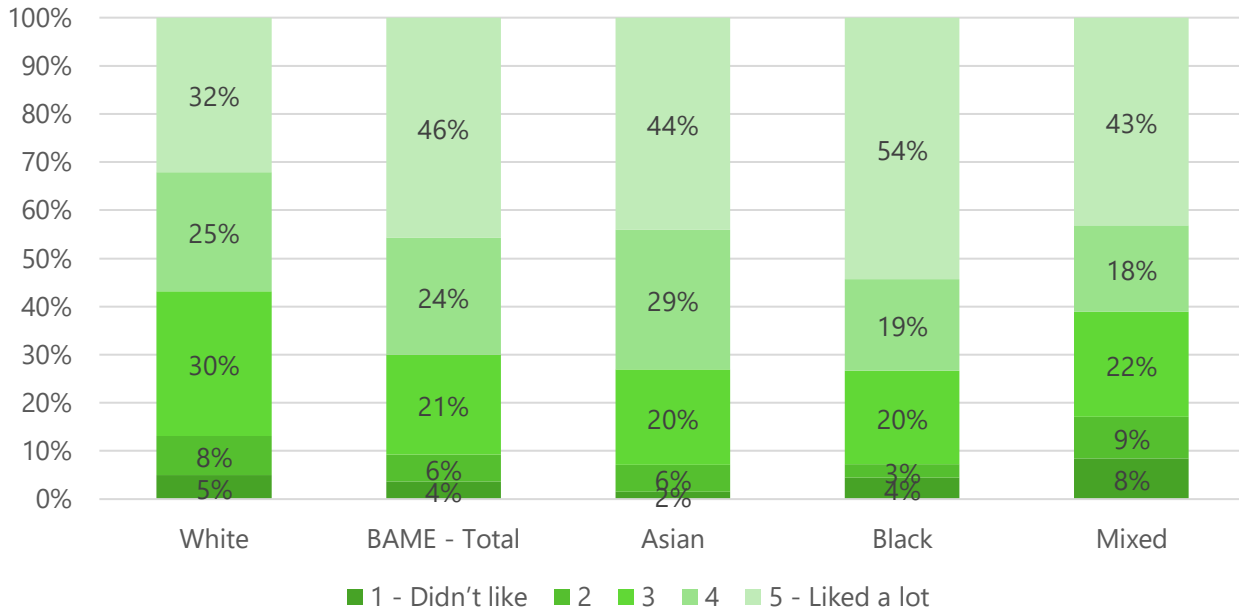




This ad was widely popular among all groups (Figure 27) and received especially positive reaction from the Black sample and, more importantly, very few cited it as likely to cause harm (Figure 29).

Figure 27

Overall, how did you feel about the ad. - Video 1 – Tilda



As one Asian female said, “It managed to include people of colour in a way that didn’t seem forced,” while a White female commented, “It’s about having fun together”.

As we can see in Figure 28 and Figure 29, very few people thought it likely to either cause offence or harm. Only a small minority across the groups think it is very likely to cause offence, and a similarly small proportion think it could cause harm.

Figure 28

Thinking about this advert, how likely is it to cause offence to people from ethnic minorities? - Video 1 – Tilda

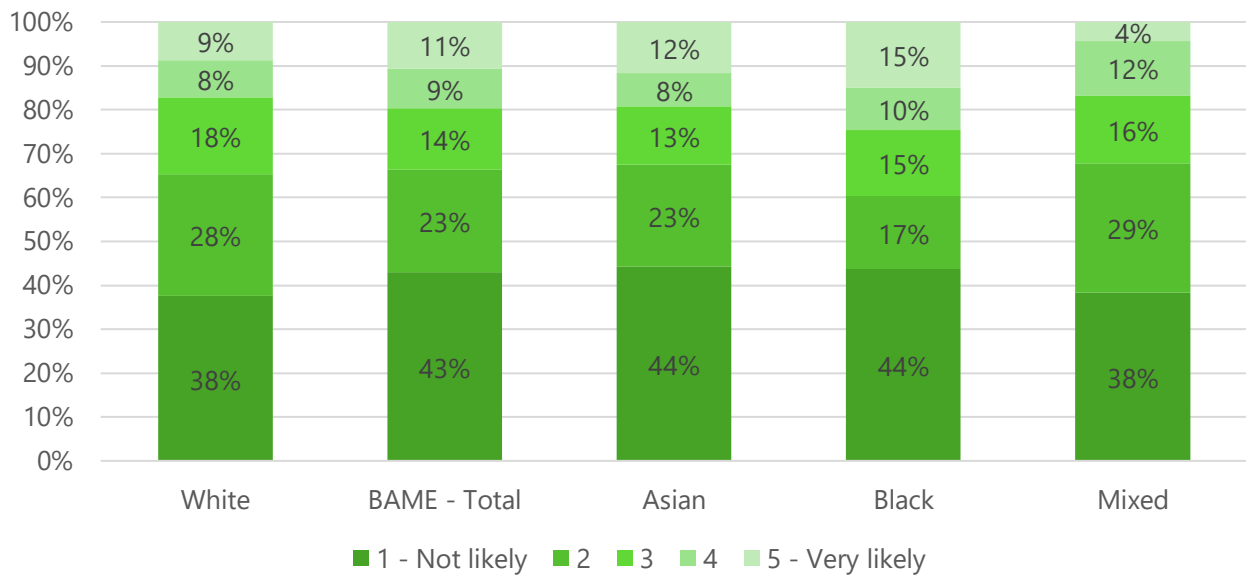
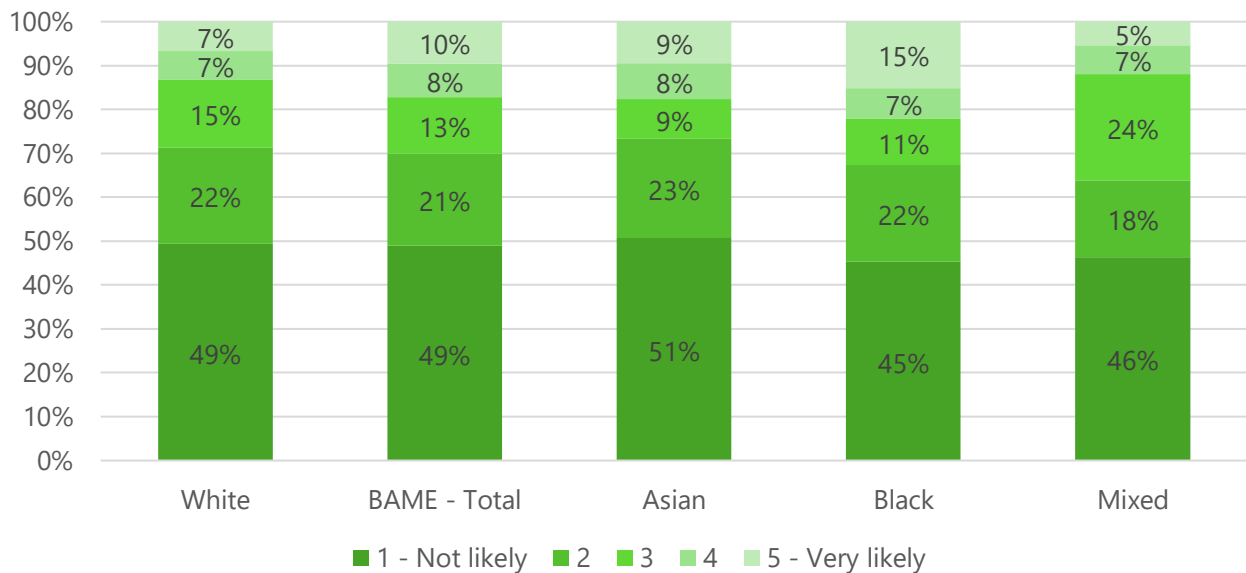


Figure 29

Thinking about this advert, how likely is it to cause harm to people from ethnic minorities? - Video 1 – Tilda



## 5.2 George at Asda

This TV ad was for school clothing from George at Asda. It featured a playground game of 'It' and showed a monster running around a playground amongst a diverse group of school children, and only at the end of the ad did it become apparent that the monster ('It') was a Black/Mixed race girl, seen in the picture below. Once the monster touched a White boy she appeared as herself and the boy became the monster.

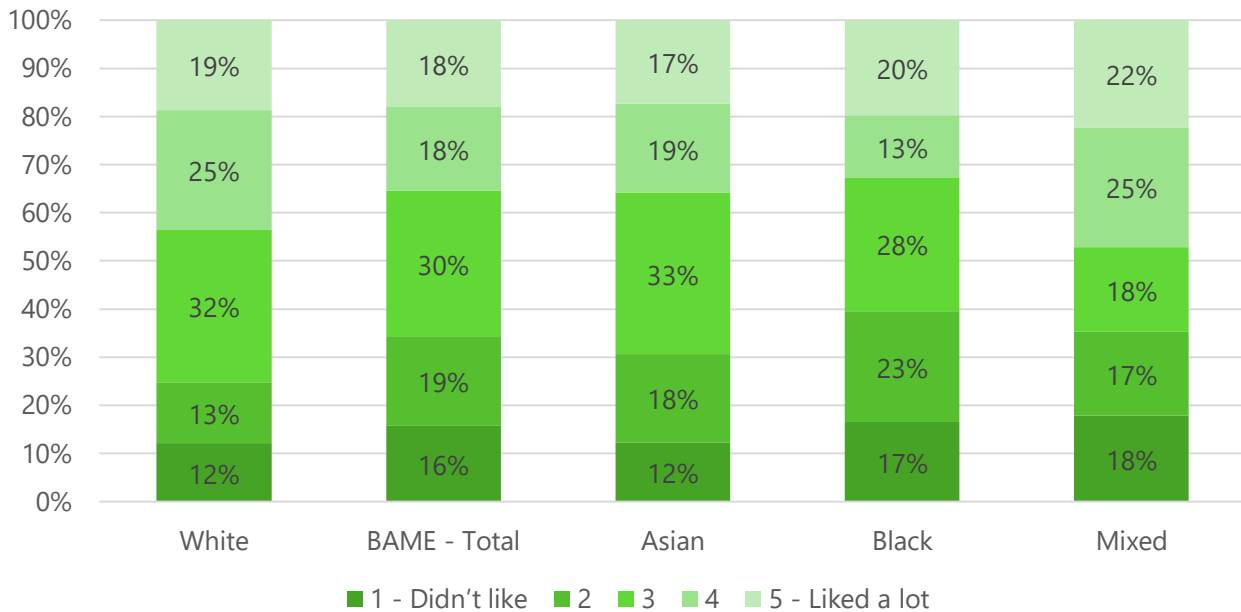
In the qualitative sessions there was considerable discomfort with the casting of the Black/Mixed race girl as the monster, although others felt equally strongly that it was harmless and demonstrated a diverse group of school children having fun. We included it in the quantitative stage to get a more accurate reading on opinion.



In the quantitative stage, this ad was more ambiguously received with similar levels of BAME respondents liking the ad (36%) as not liking it (34%). Results for White and Mixed respondents tended to be more skewed towards liking the ad (Figure 30).

Figure 30

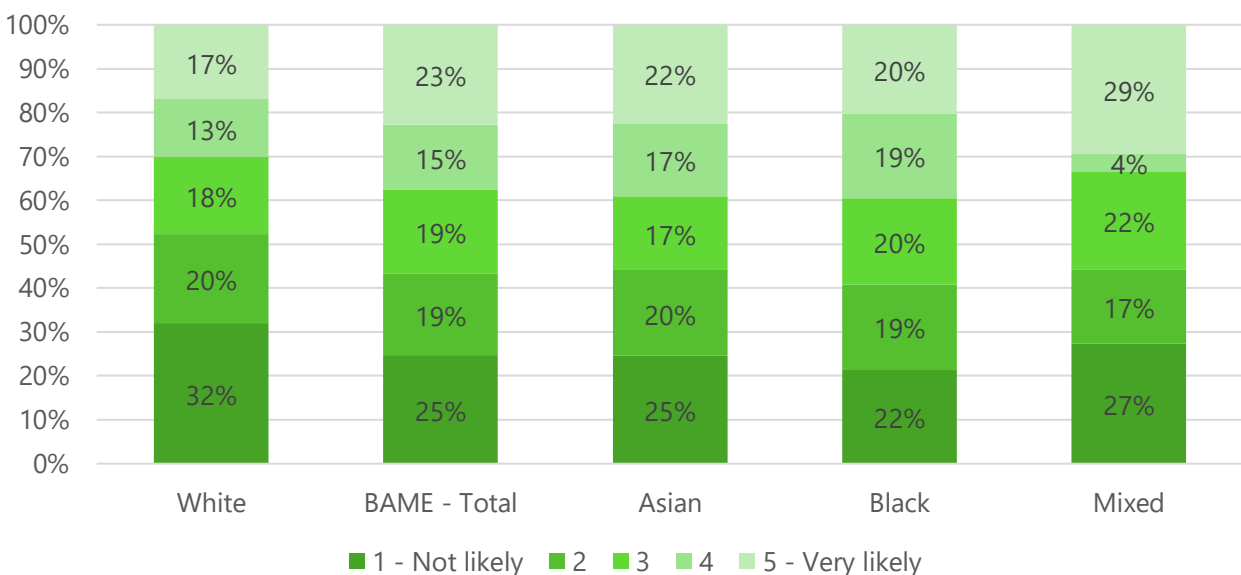
Overall, how did you feel about the ad. - Video 2 – George at Asda



As shown in Figure 31 and Figure 32, slightly higher proportions across the White, Asian and Black groups agreed that the ad was likely to cause offence compared with harm.

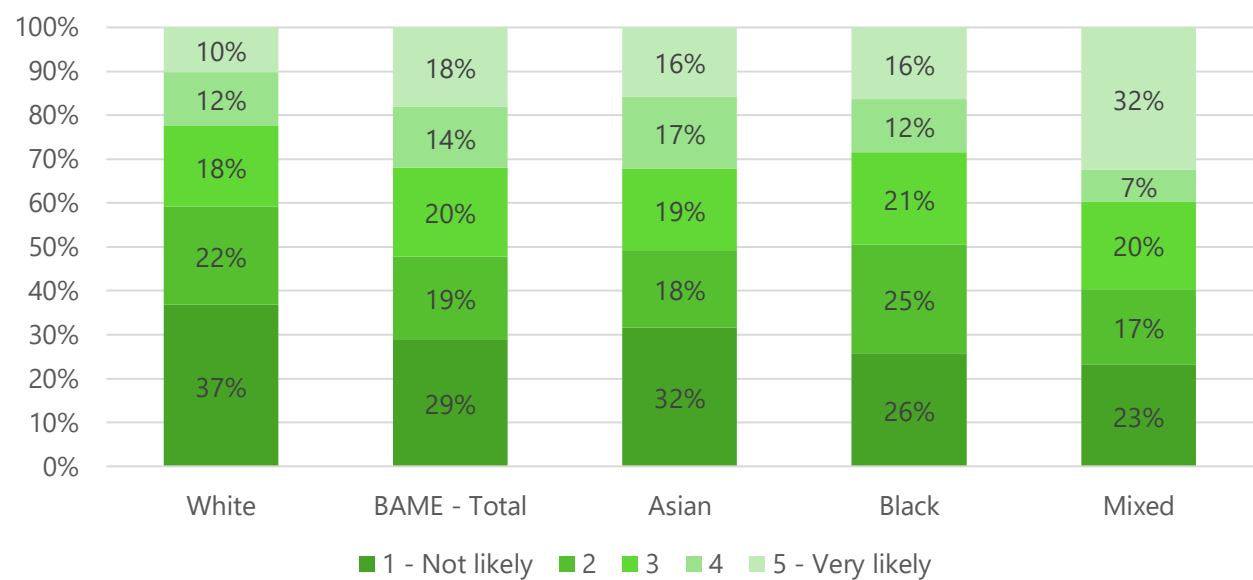
Figure 31

Thinking about this advert, how likely is it to cause offence to people from ethnic minorities? - Video 2 – George at Asda



Compared with the other groups, respondents in the Mixed group were more likely to say the ad was very likely to cause offence (29%) and very likely to cause harm (32%). It is worth noting that in the qualitative discussions, the girl who was initially the monster was often described by the participants as Mixed race rather than Black, although it is perhaps ambiguous.

Figure 32  
Thinking about this advert, how likely is it to cause harm to people from ethnic minorities? - Video 2 – George at Asda



Some of the qualitative comments illustrate the potential for the ad to cause harm or offence; while some, from BAME and White groups liked the ad, others felt very differently.

- “They are dehumanising the black person.”

Black, Female 16–21, North
- “It was offensive.”

Asian, Female 22–30, Mids
- “It makes me think that Black girls are monsters.”

Asian, Female 31–44, London SE
- “It shows that we can all be little monsters sometimes, boys, girls any colour.”

Black, Female 60+, Mids
- “It is a humorous portrayal.”

White, Female 22–30, Scotland
- “It showed them as normal.”

White, Male 16–21, Northern Ireland

“Makes people think certain ethnic groups are horrible or scary.”

Asian, Male 31–44, Scotland

“It looked a very good warm ad with a sense of fun featuring both White and ethnic groups of children. A good ad!”

White, Male 45–60, London SE

“Just children using imagination.”

Black, Female 60+, Mids

“OMG Funny but stupid story.”

White, Male 16–21, Northern Ireland

While the overall responses were not particularly negative, it was clear that there were troubling factors for a minority of respondents, as in the qualitative stage, and these seem to reflect the areas of risk of harm identified in the study.

### 5.3 Gala Bingo

This TV ad featured a Black woman cutting a Black man’s hair at home, while playing on a Bingo app on her phone. The man is seen to have a swan-shaped hairstyle and an older Black man is later shown to have a dolphin-shaped hairstyle. The campaign also ran across digital channels.

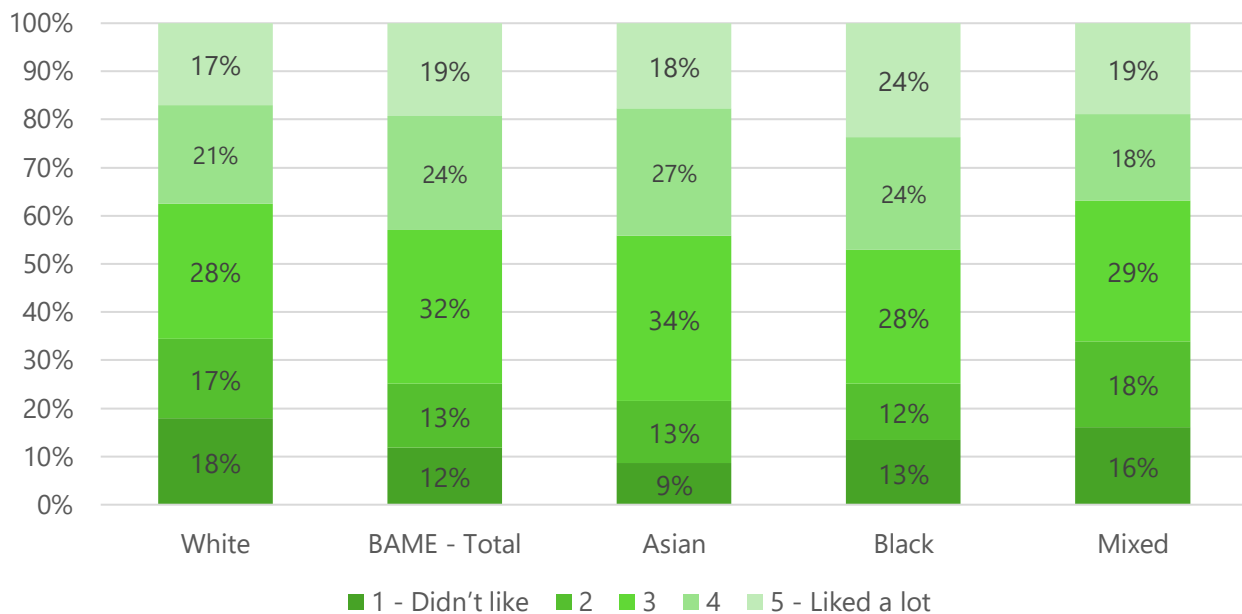
In the qualitative groups, there were concerns about the possible stereotypical casting and tone of the ad, and we wanted to get a more authoritative read of the ad across groups.



Here we saw the White respondents less positive than the BAME audience, overall (Figure 33).

Figure 33

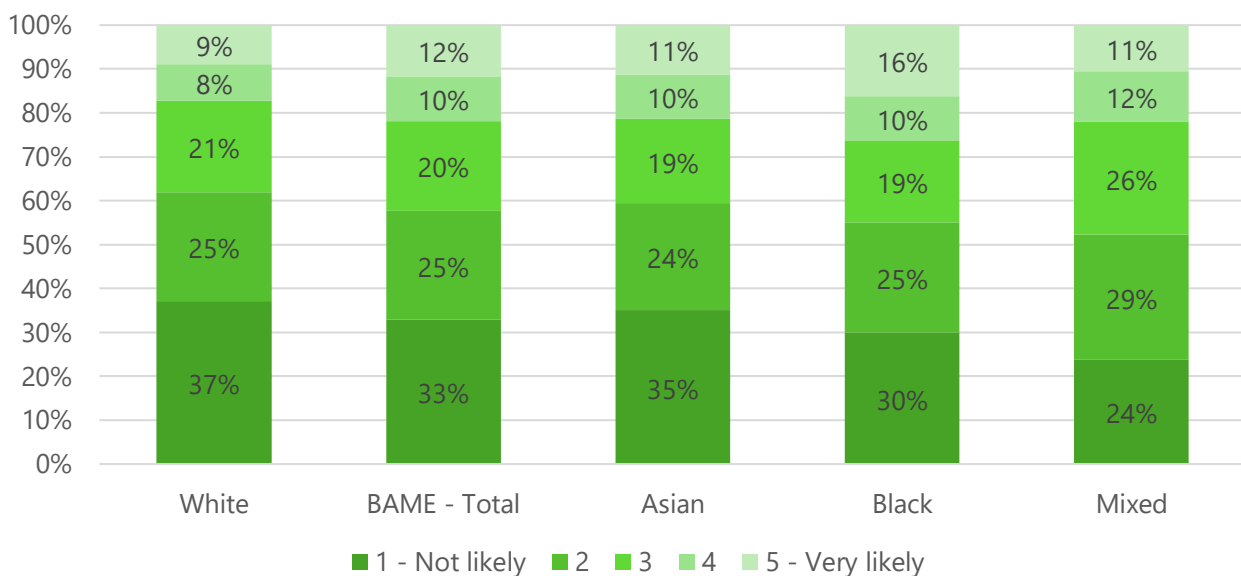
Overall, how did you feel about the ad. - Video 3 – Gala Bingo



When we focus on likelihood to cause harm to people from ethnic minorities, all groups skew towards the ad being unlikely to cause harm (Figure 34). However, where there are concerns, they are most likely to be found among the Black respondents, who have the highest scores for 'very likely'.

Figure 34

Thinking about this advert, how likely is it to cause harm to people from ethnic minorities? - Video 3 – Gala Bingo



Some of the verbatim comments help to illustrate the reasons for this split in responses:

“It's like they're saying that we do our hair like that and that we don't know how to take care of our own hair.” Black, Female 16–21, North

“Made Black people look crazy.” Black, Male 22–30, London SE

“Stereotypical – barbers and ridiculous hairstyles, I feel they are making a laughing stock out of us.” Black, Female 16–21, North

“Black people are portrayed as people who have silly hairstyles.” Mixed, Female 22–30, South West

“This ad encourages people to play bingo.” Asian, Male 31–44, Scotland

“It was relevant and fun.” Asian, Male 60+, North

Overall, this ad shows the risk from appearing to make fun of a group or their appearance and tastes. While it was often seen as good-humoured there was still an undercurrent of concern about the message and the effect from how the characters are portrayed.

#### **5.4 Ministry of Defence: Army recruitment**

This TV ad shows various scenes of a young Black/Mixed race woman working at a supermarket whilst being subjected to constant criticism from her White co-workers as being slow. Those scenes are interspersed with scenes of military action with commentary celebrating the qualities that she displays, such as attention to detail and patience.

This ad was included in the quantitative test as one that had already created strong and mixed feelings in the qualitative sessions where it was examined, and we wanted to get a sense of the scale of reactions to it. Among those who had been positive about it, it demonstrated the resilience of the main character shown below, who is subject to negative comments and abuse from White co-workers in a supermarket, but is then seen in a military context as calm and in control. Others felt the depiction of the abuse was wrong and harmful and encouraged racist behaviour even though they could see the attempted motivational message of the ad.

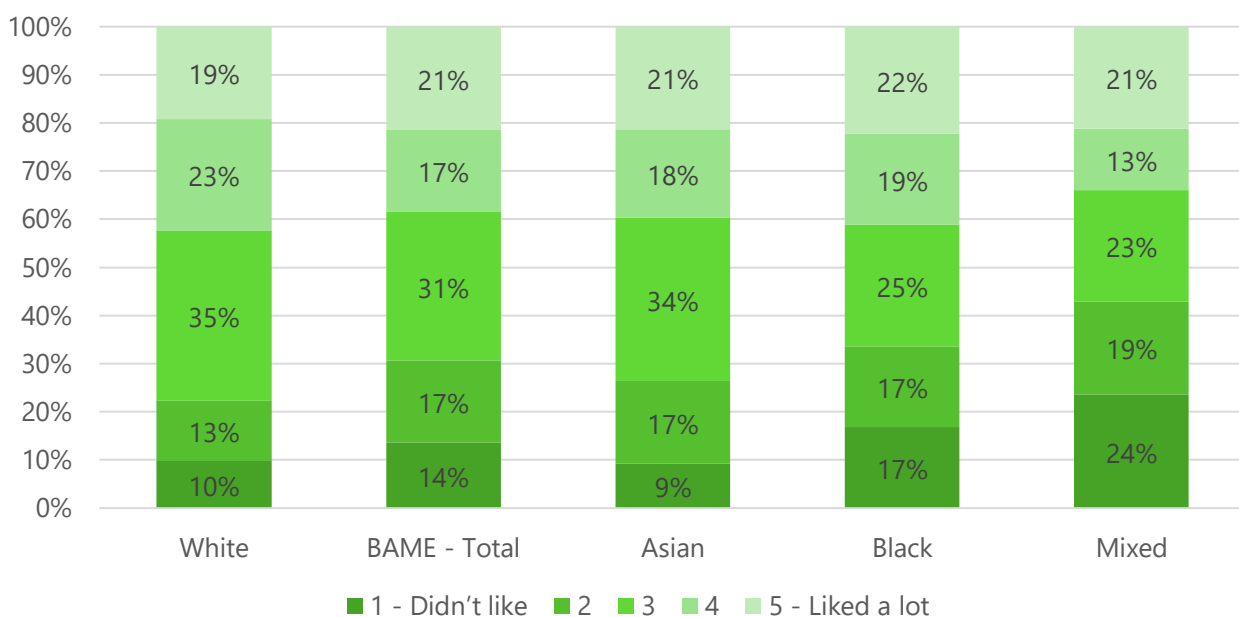




In the quantitative test we saw the following levels of overall reaction.

Figure 35

Overall, how did you feel about the ad. - Video 4 – Army Recruitment

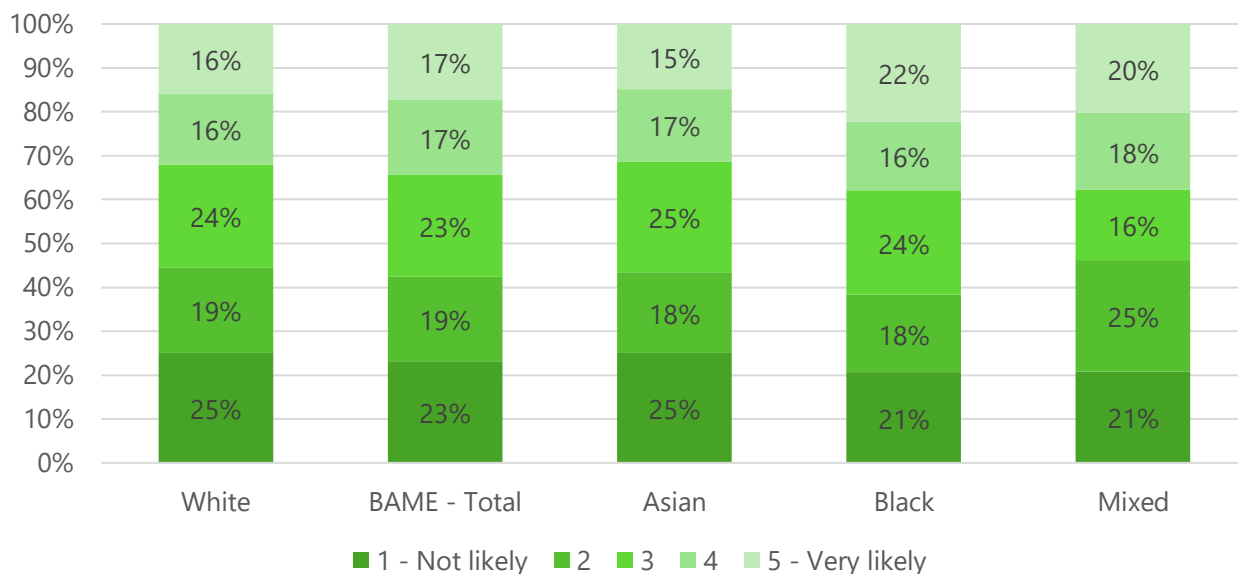


Strong negative feelings were most felt among the Mixed group (24% ranking it 1). While the ad can be seen to be divisive overall, with more positive than negative reactions among all other groups, a third of the Black sample also show negative feelings (34% ranking it 1 or 2).

When we look at the specific issue of harm, we see the scores set out in Figure 36.

Figure 36

Thinking about this advert, how likely is it to cause harm to people from ethnic minorities? - Video 4 – Army Recruitment



There is a balance in favour of the ad unlikely to cause harm across the board, but again we see a real split of opinion with Black and Mixed respondents equally likely to give a strong positive or strong negative answer, while among the White respondents the balance of opinion is more positive than negative.

Some of the comments from the qualitative research help explain this split of opinion:

“I felt insulted as a Black young adult”

Black, Female 16–21, North

“It is hurtful to see.”

Black, Female 60+, Mids

“Two White people having a go at a Black lady.”

Asian, Male 31–44, Scotland

“Because they are continuously shouting at the Black woman”

Black, Male 22–30, London SE

“It is about determination and the army, maybe the advert was intended to attract women and people who are from an ethnic background”

Black, Female 31–44, Scotland

Linking this back to the other findings of the research, responses to this ad help to illustrate the extent to which harm can be perceived from an ad that appears to represent racially negative behaviour, even when it might appear to be challenging such behaviour.

## 5.5 PrettyLittleThing

This press/outdoor ad was one of the two for women's clothing brand, Pretty Little Thing, that was tested in the qualitative phase. The creative was also posted on the advertiser's Twitter account.

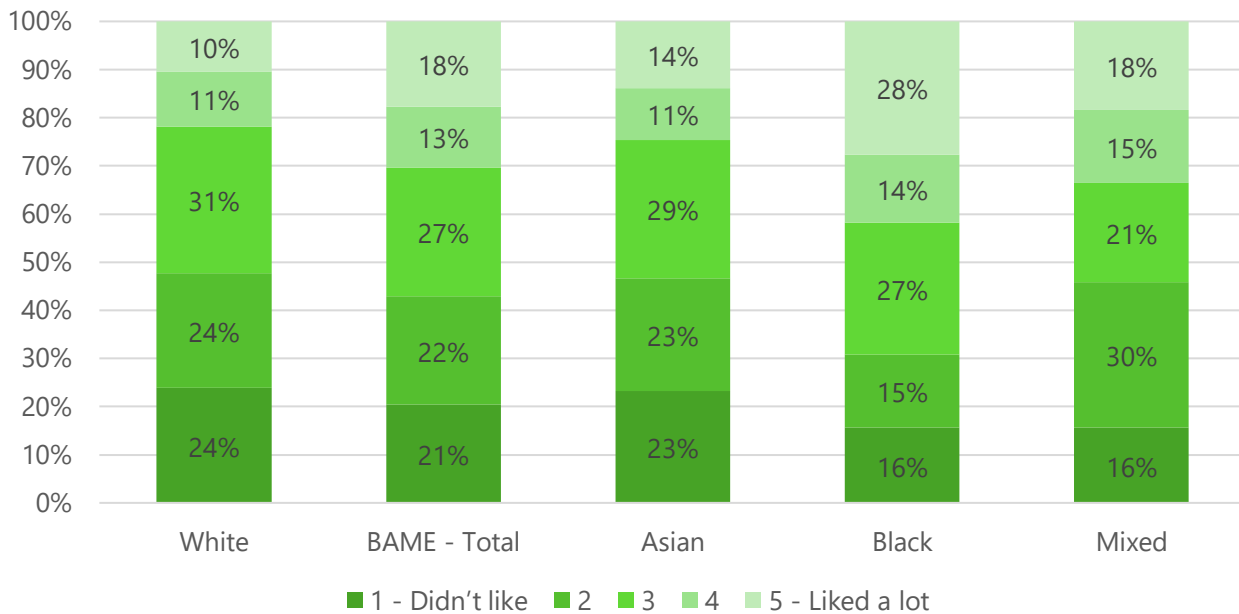
It was selected because it received a mixed reaction among male and female respondents in the qualitative research, and was felt either to embody some form of body positivity and celebration or to be an example of sexualisation and objectification. It was felt to be helpful to get a more numeric read on reactions and to be able to explore them by different sub-groups.



Overall reactions were less positive to this than any of the other ads tested, with the most negative balance of comments in terms of overall feelings (Figure 37). Given the fourth most common area of concern in the quantitative study, with regards to the potential to cause harm, was *sexualisation of ethnic groups*, it is understandable that there was a more negative reaction. It should be borne in mind that for some respondents it was a welcome example of body positivity and the use of different shapes and sizes of women, but overall, the reaction was more negative than any other ad tested.

Figure 37

Overall, how did you feel about the ad. - Still 1 – PrettyLittleThing



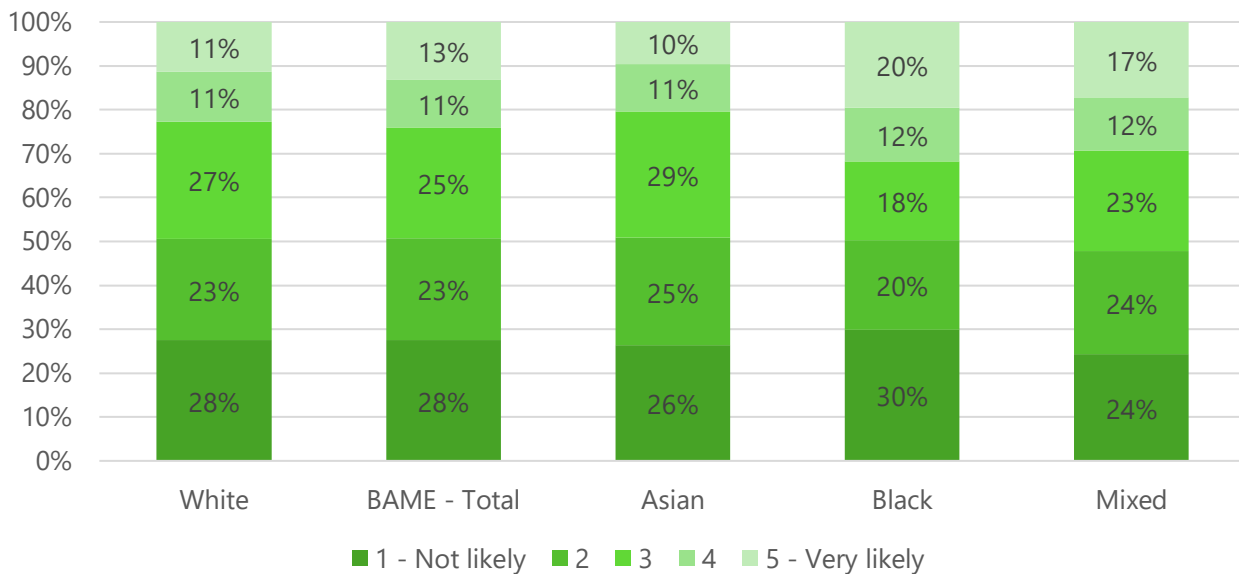
It is notable that there is a difference in balance of opinion depending on the ethnicity of respondent, with the Black respondents (42% ranking it 4 or 5) most likely to be positive compared with any group.

However, there is another issue here – the ad is generally less liked by women (18% ranking it 4 or 5) than men (28% ranking it 4 or 5), which is perhaps concerning for a fashion ad. In fact, the one group where we see a more positive balance of opinion is among Black men, the one group where more like (51%) than dislike the ad (30%). Black women are less positive about the ad (29% like it versus 33% who dislike it), but are more positive than women from other groups.

When we look at opinions about the likelihood of causing harm, we see that the Black respondents are also most likely to give a score indicating real concern in this area, as set out in Figure 38.

Figure 38

Thinking about this advert, how likely is it to cause harm to people from ethnic minorities? - Still 1 – PrettyLittleThing



It is interesting that when we look at these scores by gender, the higher score for likelihood of causing harm among Black respondents is mainly driven by Black men (25%), who are twice as likely as Black women (11%) to give a ‘very likely’ score. So, while they may be more likely to like the ad, they are also more likely to have some concerns about it. This is illustrated by the comments in the selection below:

“It basically said ‘all Black girls have big butts.’”

Black, Male 22–30, London SE

“A picture of a beautiful Black woman.”

Black, Male 45–60, Mids

“Heavily sexualised Black females.”

Black, Female 16–21, North

“Sexualised the people.”

White, Male 45–60, London SE

“They are just using women to get a lot eyes on their product.”

Black, Male 45–60, Mids

“Unnecessary sexualisation.”

White, Female 45–60, Wales

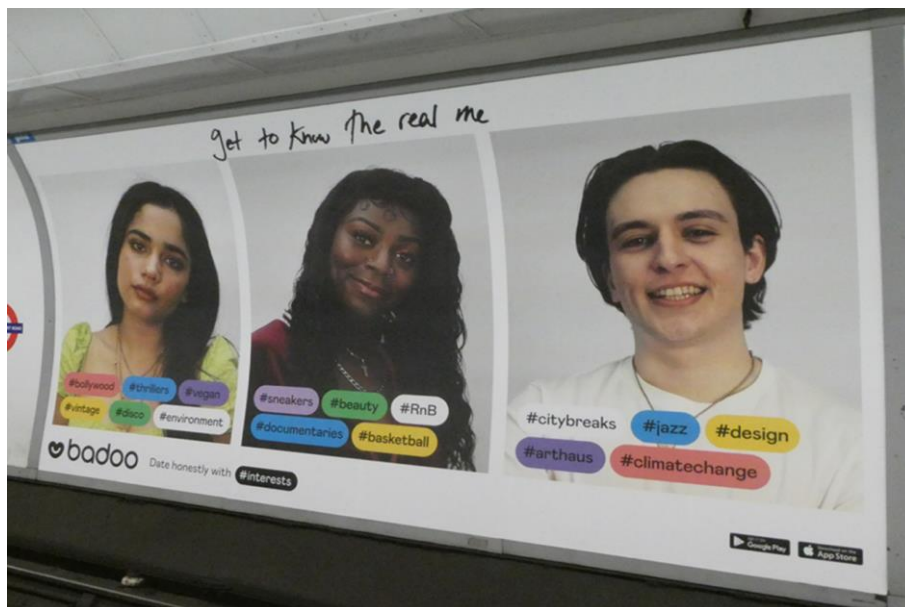
“The only thing with this pic is I would add a White woman so it is mixed.”

Mixed, Female 22–30, South West

Responses to this ad bear out the results on the high risk of harm that sexualisation of racial/ethnic groups is associated with, even though for some there were positive messages too.

## 5.6 Badoo

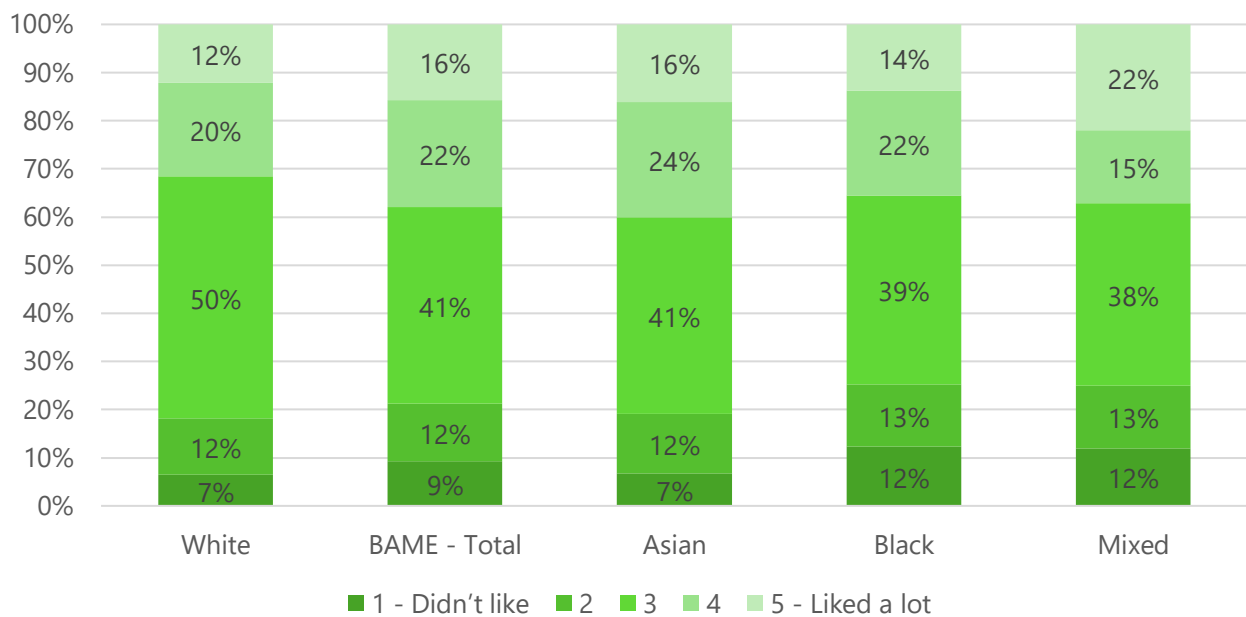
This ad for a dating app, Badoo, appeared on the London Underground. We looked at it in the qualitative research because of the use of the hashtags for the three protagonists. This ad was also identified from the qualitative stage as one that evoked mixed reactions, with some respondents finding the hashtags attributed to each of the featured characters to be stereotypical, while others either didn't see the stereotypes or felt that it was a colour-blind portrayal of three people.



Overall, it was rated more positively than negatively, with few strong negative opinions and more neutral opinions (scoring it 3) than the other ads tested (Figure 39). However, it was not as well received among Mixed and Black respondents, who were more likely to pick up on the stereotypes.

Figure 39

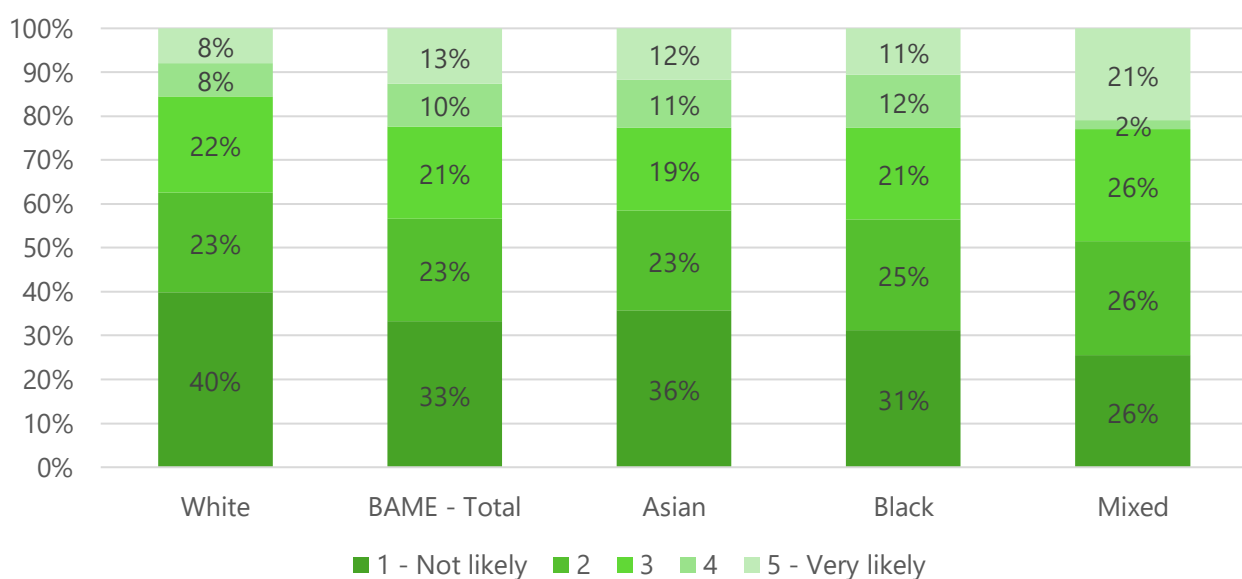
Overall, how did you feel about the ad. - Still 2 – Badoo



A larger minority of the Mixed sample said it was very likely to cause harm, compared with all other groups - although the smaller proportion slightly agreeing (scoring it 4) mean that the net scores for all BAME groups are similar.

Figure 40

Thinking about this advert, how likely is it to cause harm to people from ethnic minorities? - Still 2 – Badoo



Some of the open-ended comments from the qualitative stage help illuminate the data:

“It’s all a bit stereotypical... why can’t the young man like reggae and Bollywood and the Asian girl like Jazz instead?”  
White, Female 45–60, Wales

“The interests ascribed to each ethnic group felt like stereotypes.”  
White, Male 45–60, London SE

“Why was the Asian vegan? Why was the Black lady into sneakers, very stereo typical and it categorises them.”  
Asian, Female 31–44, London SE

“Slightly stereo typical, but not offensive.”  
White, Female 22–30, Scotland

“Some hashtags are OK, others are a bit patronising. But at least there is a spectrum.”  
White, Female 13–15, Mids

Again, the spectrum of responses here bears out what we saw above, in particular that stereotyping of ethnicities is associated with harm by a significant minority, especially from the BAME communities, but for the majority, the ad is unlikely to cause harm.



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## 6 Roles, responsibilities and expectations

In the qualitative research, we wrapped up the sessions by asking what people believed ought to be done in terms of rules, guidelines and oversight for advertising, and who they believed was responsible. At the moment, the responsibility for ensuring that advertising does not portray or perpetuate harmful stereotypes is widely seen as the duty of the media carrying the advertising, and also the responsibility of the brands who put the ads out.

“They have to vet the ads if they are showing them.” White, Female 45–60, Wales

“It is up to the advertiser; they will get in trouble if there is something wrong.”  
Black, Male 22–30, London SE

There is limited awareness of a regulatory body for advertising, although some respondents recall seeing ads for the ASA.

“It is about being legal, decent, honest, truthful, something like that.”  
White, Male 45–60, London SE

It is widely expected that there are some guidelines about how advertising should deal with portrayal of race and ethnicity, and about areas to avoid – both from a legal point of view and in the interest of the good reputation of brands.

“No one wants to be doing something stupid today, making a racist ad. That would be such an own goal.” Jewish, Male 31–44, London SE

However, the experience of watching a range of ads suggested to respondents that there was still scope for change, to avoid causing inadvertent offence and also to set out what was unacceptable in 2021.

“For example, showing racist behaviour – you can see why they did it but it is such a dangerous area – it is worth having guidelines to say steer clear of it.”  
Black, Female 31–44, Scotland

“You wonder if they have anyone on the team who can just point these things out – surely if they had a Black or Asian person, they would say don’t just say that?”  
Asian, Male 13–15, North

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## 7 Conclusions

This project has yielded evidence both of concerns about the potential harm that advertising can do to the perception and self-perception of those from different racial or ethnic communities, and of the expectation that, while there is a sense of change in recent years, more can be done to improve representation of racial and ethnic minorities and avoid particular types of portrayal that have the potential to cause harm.

Advertising is not seen as a primary influence on perception of racial or ethnic groups, or on their self-perception, but it is seen as having a potential for either good or ill.

Advertising is seen as having changed for the better in terms of representation and portrayal, and it is seen as a medium where people from all communities expect to see themselves reflected accurately and positively. This does not always happen today, sometimes as a result of insensitivity and sometimes with the best of intentions. This study clearly sets out some areas where harm can be done and what should be avoided.

Representation of seriously racist or offensive behaviour in advertising is never acceptable today, even in some circumstances where such portrayals are intended to make that point. It is widely rejected by all groups. Sexualisation and mockery, being shown as outsiders and stereotyping are all rejected by significant minorities as potentially harmful.

The study showed how advertising can successfully include people from racial and ethnic minorities and also provided indications of the potential pitfalls to avoid. The examples tested in the research helped to illustrate what a substantial minority of the population find potentially offensive or harmful. This is, therefore, likely to have practical value: to assist advertisers, their agencies and regulatory authorities to better determine when portrayals of race or ethnicity in ads are more or less likely to cause harm or offence to the groups of people featured in the ads, and – associated with this – to encourage greater and more faithful representation and portrayal of BAME people in ads by reducing the potential to inadvertently cause offence or harm.

That so many people from racial or ethnic minority backgrounds want to see examples of people like themselves represented in advertising, and that there is wide support among the overall public for this representation, shows the importance of ensuring portrayal can be executed successfully without creating inadvertent harm or offence along the way.

This report identifies the public desire for such representation and portrayal, the areas where there is risk of potential harm and offence, and the benefits that can arise from successful implementation of this learning.



## Appendix 1 – Focus group discussion guide

### Introduction (10 mins)

Welcome, thanks, confidentiality and recording/observation.

Introduce topic – identity, race, ethnicity, diversity, how they get dealt with in advertising.

Emphasise we are looking for personal opinions – we know this is an important and contentious issue and we don't want you all to agree. This is not about us all agreeing – rather it is about everyone having a chance to give their feelings and hear each other's.

And also – given we are talking about race, ethnicity and diversity, and we know these are sensitive and sometimes difficult topics – we want you to be comfortable with the language we are using, and we want you to tell us how you are happy to talk about yourself. Lots of surveys ask people to answer questions about ethnicity, origin, and for that matter age and gender, and we constantly need to think about how we talk about these subjects and the words we use.

So, if you are not happy with some words, or prefer others – please tell us, as this is exactly what we want to learn today. And if we get something wrong, please come right out and tell us that too – don't hold back or be worried about our feelings. We want you to feel you can talk to us exactly as you choose.

So, first of all let's go round the Zoom room and introduce ourselves – tell me your name, and whatever else is most important for us to know about you

Moderator starts, including nationality, ethnicity, age, family, work etc.

Make participants aware of observers.

### Identity and public portrayal (10 mins)

How do you feel when people who share the same ethnicity; belong to the same racial group; or share similar characteristics as you (such as accents) are portrayed publicly? (*Please use this or similar terminology throughout*)

First of all, what are the places where you notice *different people with different characteristics and ethnicities* being represented (*where do you see people like you, like me, like Dino etc....*) write on a virtual flipchart (*expect TV, Sport, Politics, Cinema etc. and look out for mention of ads*)

For each category / medium mentioned get a sense of

- How well it represents different groups
- How important it is as a way of showing diversity

## **Advertising in detail (10 mins)**

We have talked about how advertising represents certain ethnicities or racial groups. When we're thinking about advertising, we mean that broadly – for example, not just TV but also radio, cinema, posters, newspapers and magazines and online, including social media. First of all, we would like you to come up with any memories of ads that you noticed as representing people like yourself well.

How do you feel when you see an ad like that?

And what about other ads that represent other groups – give us some good examples of those

Now what about the opposite – either bad examples or ads that just don't show people from different groups (*look out for any mentions of stereotypes or tokenism*)

Why have you picked those – and how do you feel when you see ads like that? What effects do you think those ads have?

How important is the way different ethnicities or racial groups are portrayed in ads compare with other protected characteristics, including age, gender, sexuality, etc.

## **The role of advertising (10 mins)**

Do you think advertising should feature all sorts of people in it, from different racial or ethnic backgrounds - why or why not?

Who benefits if advertising does a good job of representing diversity?

Do you think advertising portrayal has an impact on public opinion and attitudes (for good or bad) - and if so how? Who does it affect, the people portrayed or others?

## **Examples of good and bad practice (30 mins)**

We are going to show you some ads that ran recently in the UK and elsewhere

We will show each one and then have a brief discussion about it: some people think some of the ads were good examples and some were complained about. Tell us what **you** think

Discussion of each ad. Explore general views and then, specifically:

- Positives and negatives
- How are different people represented in the ad? What sort of image do different people in the ad project? How do you feel about this?

- How would you describe the tone of the ad?
- *Where relevant explore race/ nationality/ linguistics/ religion/ culture/ physical traits/ behavioural traits. Also, where relevant, explore use of humour/ exaggerated characters, positive stereotypes, etc. Views on whether the ad reinforces or challenges stereotypes?*
- Does anything in particular bother you? Why/why not?
- Do you think anyone else might be bothered by any aspects of the ad? Why/why not?
- Explore the impact of the placement and context of the ad, where it appeared and who saw it?

What message do you think this advert sends out about the people in the ad/people from different racial groups or ethnicities?

- How does that make you feel?
- To what extent do you feel the ad represents real life?
- To what extent do you think this message encourages people to think in a certain way about people of a different racial group or ethnicity?
- To what extent do you think this message encourages people from a particular racial or ethnic group see themselves in a particular way?

### **Themes and impact (10 mins)**

Thinking about the ads we've seen how would you summarise how you feel about them? Are there any recurring themes?

Do you think any of the ads were offensive in the way they portray different racial groups or ethnicities? Who are they offensive to? How do you think they were offensive?

Do you think any of the ads were harmful? Who are they harmful to? What harm might they cause?

*Note for moderators: Offence can generally be understood as the contravention of accepted moral, social or cultural standards, which some may consider upsetting, hurtful or insulting. Where we regulate offence, it must pass the threshold of likely to cause serious or widespread offence. Ads are not necessarily a problem if, in the ASA's opinion, they do not offend against prevailing standards in society and fall below a 'serious offence' threshold, but they might be problematic if they depict or represent a specific group of people in a way that is offensive to that group.*

*Note for moderators: Harm refers to the real world social, moral or physical damage that is linked to certain forms of content or portrayal*

### **The role of rules about advertising (5 mins)**

Whose responsibility is it to ensure ads are not offensive or harmful? Explore role of brands/advertisers/media/a regulatory body?

Do you know of any rules or restrictions about how advertising portrays different people? What kind of rules? Who enforces them?

Have you ever heard of any ads being banned or complained about (*open this up*)?

Do you think the rules are doing a good job in this area - are they too tough or too loose based on what you see?

### **Wrapping up (10 mins)**

This is maybe an unusual group – this is not about selling to you or testing ads out or new products.

But there has been a lot in the news over the last couple of years about diversity and representation and we wanted to get your views on this topic.

The ASA is the independent regulator for advertising in the UK. It ensures ads are legal, decent, honest and truthful, taking action on ads which are misleading, harmful, offensive or irresponsible. Through this research we want to get your views on how you feel about the way different groups of people are portrayed in ads and whether we need do more to prevent harmful racial and ethnic stereotypes in advertising.

What points under the following headings would you like to share with us?

- What would you like to see different if we were doing this in 2025
- How different do you think today is to 10 years ago
- What most needs to change

Write down individually then discuss as a group

### **Finally**

We have covered a lot tonight, and you might well think of some more examples of ads that are either good or bad: you might also think you have some other thoughts you didn't speak out loud

We will send you a text with a link to a mini survey that we are asking all our respondents to fill in - it will only take a few minutes



## Appendix 2 – Focus group stimulus material

The following ads were tested across the focus groups – bold denotes ads tested in the quantitative stage:

American Apparel – Outdoor

Asda: Featuring ‘Sunny’ - TV

**Asda: George at Asda - TV/Cinema**

B&Q: What a day it was... - TV

BAAD Glasgow: Gypsy Taproom - Digital

**Badoo Trading: Hashtags – Outdoor**

Burberry: Singing in the Rain – TV/Digital

BYREDO France SAS: Gypsy Water - Digital

Childline: Think You Understand Me? –TV/Cinema/Digital

Direct Collection Bailiffs: Evictions - Digital

EE - VoD

H&M: Christmas – TV/Digital

Halifax: It’s a People Thing - TV

HM Government: NHS Covid-19 awareness - Press

HM Government: NHS Covid-19 awareness – TV

Home Office: #knifefree - Outdoor

**LC International: Gala Bingo (Haircut) – TV**

Lings Cars - Digital

Ministry of Defence: Army Recruitment (Confidence) - TV

**Ministry of Defence: Army Recruitment (Supermarket) – TV**

Ministry of Defence: Royal Navy Recruitment - TV

Nationwide Building Society: Poem - TV

Nestlé: Fab Ice Cream - Outdoor

NHS: Organ Donation - TV

OVO Energy - TV

**PrettyLittleThing – Outdoor**

PrettyLittleThing - TV

Telefonica: England Rugby Team – TV/Digital

The UK Intelligence Agencies - Press

Thinkbox: Tooth Fairy - TV

Thomas Tunnocks - Radio

**Tilda Rice – TV**

TSB Bank: Featuring David Schwimmer - TV

TSB Bank: Tailor/Balloon seller animation - TV

TSB Bank: Working-from-home - TV

Unilever: Vaseline - TV

Vic Smith Bedding - Press

Walkers/KFC - TV

Walkers: Featuring Guz Khan and the Spice Girls - TV

We Buy Any Car - TV

Yakult UK - TV

### Appendix 3 - Survey sample structure

Unweighted sample:

BAME adult sample	950
BAME 13 – 15 sample	100
White adult sample	950
White 13 – 15 sample	100

Total BAME sample by group:

All Asian	483
All Black	354
All Mixed	128
All Other	85

The sample was weighted to be nationally representative of the UK population as is standard research practice.

## Appendix 4 - Survey questionnaire

No.	Question	Options
1	<p>Welcome to our survey. We would like to ask you some questions about the way the UK is today. It should take you no more than 10 minutes.</p> <p>COG Research are a member of the Market Research Society company partner scheme and meets all data security requirements. No information you give will be directly attributed to you and none of your personal information is stored. Learn more about our Data Security policies.</p>	
	<b>IDENTITY</b>	
2	<p>Please rank the options in order of importance in relation to how you would describe your identity:</p> <p>option 0: Least Important option 1: option 2: option 3: option 4: option 5: Most important</p>	<p>option 0: Your Age</p> <p>option 1: Your Gender</p> <p>option 2: Your Sexual Orientation</p> <p>option 3: Your Marital Status</p> <p>option 4: Your Ethnicity</p> <p>option 5: Your Religion</p>
3	What is your ethnic group?	<p>option 0: White (show Q4)</p> <p>option 1: Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups (show Q5)</p> <p>option 2: Asian/Asian British (show Q6)</p> <p>option 3: Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British (show Q7)</p> <p>option 4: Other ethnic group (show Q8)</p>

<b>4</b>	Thank you, now please choose one option that best describes your ethnic heritage or background?	option 0: English option 1: Welsh option 2: Scottish option 3: Northern Irish option 4: Irish option 5: British option 6: Gypsy, Traveller or Roma option 7: Jewish option 8: European option 9: Any other White background, please describe (show Q9)
<b>5</b>	Thank you, now please choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background?	option 0: White and Black Caribbean option 1: White and Black African option 2: White and Asian option 3: Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background, please describe (show Q9)
<b>6</b>	Thank you, now please choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background?	option 0: Indian option 1: Pakistani option 2: Bangladeshi option 3: Chinese option 4: Any other Asian background, please describe (show Q9)
<b>7</b>	Thank you, now please choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background?	option 0: African option 1: Caribbean option 2: Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, please describe (show Q9)
<b>8</b>	Thank you, now please choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background?	option 0: Arab option 1: Any other ethnic group, please describe (show Q9)
<b>9</b>	Please describe other in space below.	

10	To what extent do you identify with the category you picked?	option 0: I strongly identify option 1: I partly identify option 2: I somewhat identify option 3: I do not identify option 4: Don't identify at all
<b>PUBLIC PORTRAYAL &amp; THE ROLE OF ADVERTISING</b>		
11	How important do you feel each of these are in influencing how people see each other and themselves? Please rank them in order of influence - <b>ROTATE ORDER</b> News/current affairs Government/politics Education Employment Sport Arts, including music, films, fashion Media, including TV programmes, magazines, social media Advertising Family/social backgrounds	option 0: 1 Least influential option 8: 9 Most influential
12	Now please rank the following areas in order of <b>how important</b> it is for them to feature people from your ethnic group. – <b>ROTATE ORDER</b> News/current affairs Government/politics Education Employment Sport Arts, including music, films, fashion Media, including TV programmes, magazines, social media Advertising	option 0: 1 Least important option 7: 8 Most important
12b	Please rank the areas in order of <b>how well</b> they do at featuring people from your ethnic group. – <b>ROTATE ORDER</b> News/current affairs Government/politics Education Employment Sport Arts, including music, films, fashion Media, including TV programmes, magazines, social media Advertising	option 0: 1 Least important option 7: 8 Most important

13	<p>Do you think people from your ethnic group are under or over represented in the media?</p> <p><b>When we say ‘represented’ we are talking about <u>how much/how often</u> people are shown.</b></p> <p><b>When we say ‘media’ we mean this broadly to cover news, music, TV, film, magazines, advertising, etc.</b></p>	<p>option 0: Not represented at all</p> <p>option 1: Underrepresented</p> <p>option 2: Get right amount of coverage</p> <p>option 3: Overrepresented</p>
14	<p>When people from your ethnic group are portrayed in the media, do you think this portrayal is accurate?</p> <p><b>When we say ‘portrayed’, we mean <u>the way</u> in which people are shown.</b></p> <p><b>When we say ‘media’ we mean this broadly to cover news, music, TV, film, magazines, advertising, etc.</b></p>	<p>option 0: 1 Not accurate at all</p> <p>option 4: 5 Very accurate</p>
<b>PORTRAYAL IN ADS</b>		
	<p>Now we would like to ask you some questions about advertising. When we talk about adverts, we mean that broadly across TV, radio, cinema, posters, newspapers &amp; magazines and online, including social media.</p>	
15	<p>Do you think people from your ethnic group are under or over represented in adverts?</p> <p><b>When we say ‘represented’ we are talking about <u>how much/how often</u> people are shown.</b></p>	<p>option 0: Not represented at all</p> <p>option 1: Underrepresented</p> <p>option 2: Get right amount of coverage</p> <p>option 3: Overrepresented</p>
16	<p>Do you think people from your ethnic group are portrayed accurately in adverts?</p> <p><b>When we say ‘portrayed’, we mean <u>the way</u> in which people are shown.</b></p>	<p>option 0: Broadly yes (show 24 to 31)</p> <p>option 1: Broadly no (show 16 to 23)</p>
	<p><b>If Option 1 at Q16</b> To what extent do you think: <b>- ROTATE STATEMENTS</b></p>	
17	<p>People from my ethnic group are portrayed accurately in advertising</p>	<p>option 0: 1 Strongly disagree</p> <p>option 4: 5 Strongly agree</p>
18	<p>People from my ethnic group are negatively stereotyped in advertising</p>	<p>option 0: 1 Strongly disagree</p> <p>option 4: 5 Strongly agree</p>
19	<p>People from my ethnic group are underrepresented in advertising</p>	<p>option 0: 1 Strongly disagree</p> <p>option 4: 5 Strongly agree</p>
20	<p>Real thought and understanding goes into how people from my ethnic group are shown in adverts</p>	<p>option 0: 1 Strongly disagree</p> <p>option 4: 5 Strongly agree</p>

21	When I see people from my ethnic group in adverts, it feels like they've been included just for the sake of it	option 0: 1 Strongly disagree option 4: 5 Strongly agree
22	The way people from my ethnic group are portrayed in adverts has improved in recent years	option 0: 1 Strongly disagree option 4: 5 Strongly agree
23	It's nice to see people from my ethnic group in adverts	option 0: 1 Strongly disagree option 4: 5 Strongly agree
	<b>If Option 0 at Q16</b>  <b>Thinking about people from other ethnic groups, to what extent do you think:</b> <b>- ROTATE STATEMENTS</b>	
24	People from other ethnic groups are portrayed accurately in advertising	option 0: 1 Strongly disagree option 4: 5 Strongly agree
25	People from other ethnic groups are negatively stereotyped in advertising	option 0: 1 Strongly disagree option 4: 5 Strongly agree
26	People from other ethnic groups are underrepresented in advertising	option 0: 1 Strongly disagree option 4: 5 Strongly agree
27	Real thought and understanding goes into how people from other ethnic groups are shown in adverts	option 0: 1 Strongly disagree option 4: 5 Strongly agree
28	When I see people from other ethnic groups in adverts, it feels like they've been included just for the sake of it	option 0: 1 Strongly disagree option 4: 5 Strongly agree
29	The way people from other ethnic groups are portrayed in adverts has improved in recent years	option 0: 1 Strongly disagree option 4: 5 Strongly agree
30	It's nice to see people from other ethnic groups in adverts	option 0: 1 Strongly disagree option 4: 5 Strongly agree
	<b>HARM &amp; OFFENCE</b> <i>Offence: When we talk about offence, we mean things that might be upsetting, hurtful or insulting</i> <i>Harm: When we talk about harm, we mean things that could cause social, moral, mental or physical damage</i>	
32	Have you recently seen or heard any advertising featuring people from ethnic minorities that was offensive to you?	Yes No
33	Have you recently seen or heard any advertising featuring people from ethnic minorities you think might be offensive to others?	Yes No
34	Sometimes adverts might make people feel upset or angry or may cause harm. Thinking about adverts featuring people from different ethnic groups, which of these do you think could cause this type of reaction? <b>PLEASE PUT EACH IN THE BOX THAT FITS BEST</b>	Box 1 Causes harm Box 2 Causes upset or anger Box 3 Just irritating Box 4 No effect

	<p>Making fun of accents</p> <p>Stereotypes, such as their job roles or social positions</p> <p>Religious references</p> <p>Sexualisation of ethnic groups</p> <p>Stereotypical portrayal of physical/behavioural traits</p> <p>Inaccurate/simplistic/generalised portrayal</p> <p>Humour at the expense of ethnic groups</p> <p>Discrimination towards particular ethnic groups</p> <p>Showing ethnic groups as outsiders</p> <p>Showing ethnic groups in a degrading way</p>	
	To what extent do you think:	
35	Adverts that show people from my ethnic group impact how people in society see me or what they think about me	<p>option 0: 1 Strongly disagree</p> <p>option 4: 5 Strongly agree</p>
36	Adverts that show people from my ethnic group impact how I see myself	<p>option 0: 1 Strongly disagree</p> <p>option 4: 5 Strongly agree</p>
37	<p><b>ASK ALL</b></p> <p>Can you think of any examples of adverts that affect the way people think about people from ethnic minority groups?</p>	
	<p><b>AD TESTING</b></p> <p><i>Offence: When we talk about offence, we mean things that might be upsetting, hurtful or insulting</i></p> <p><i>Harm: When we talk about harm, we mean things that could cause social, moral, mental or physical damage</i></p>	
38	<p>Now we would like to show you a couple of ads and get your reaction to them in terms of how they portray all sorts of people.</p> <p>Please turn your sound on and watch the ad then we will ask you a few questions</p>	Text only
39	Show ad 1 (rotated 3 ads)	
40	Overall, how did you feel about the ad	<p>option 0: 1 Didn't like</p> <p>option 4: 5 Liked a lot</p>
41	<p>How did you feel it portrayed different ethnic groups?</p> <p><b>When we say 'portrayed', we mean <u>the way in which</u> people are shown.</b></p>	<p>option 0: 1 Portrayed poorly</p> <p>option 4: 5 Portrayed well</p>
42	Why do you say that?	
43	Thinking about this advert, how likely is it to cause offence to people from ethnic minorities?	<p>option 0: 1 Not likely</p> <p>option 4: 5 Very likely</p>
44	Why do you say that?	



45	Thinking about this advert, how likely is it to cause harm to people from ethnic minorities?	option 0: 1 Not likely option 4: 5 Very likely
46	Why do you say that?	
47	<b>Show ad 2 (rotated 3 ads)</b>	
48	Overall, how did you feel about the ad	option 0: 1 Didn't like option 4: 5 Liked a lot
49	How did you feel it portrayed different ethnic groups? <b>When we say 'portrayed', we mean <u>the way in which</u> people are shown.</b>	option 0: 1 Portrayed poorly option 4: 5 Portrayed well
50	Why do you say that?	
51	Thinking about this advert, how likely is it to cause offence to people from ethnic minorities?	option 0: 1 Not likely option 4: 5 Very likely
52	Why do you say that?	
53	Thinking about this advert, how likely is it to cause harm to people from ethnic minorities?	option 0: 1 Not likely option 4: 5 Very likely
54	Why do you say that?	
55	<b>Show ad 3 (rotated 3 ads)</b>	<b>Static Image shown for 5 seconds</b>
56	Overall, how did you feel about the ad	option 0: 1 Didn't like option 4: 5 Liked a lot
57	How did you feel it portrayed different ethnic groups? <b>When we say 'portrayed', we mean <u>the way in which</u> people are shown.</b>	option 0: 1 Portrayed poorly option 4: 5 Portrayed well
58	Why do you say that?	
59	Thinking about this advert, how likely is it to cause offence to people from ethnic minorities?	option 0: 1 Not likely option 4: 5 Very likely
60	Why do you say that?	
61	Thinking about this advert, how likely is it to cause harm to people from ethnic minorities?	option 0: 1 Not likely option 4: 5 Very likely
62	Why do you say that?	
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>		

<b>C1</b>	<p>Finally, a few questions about yourself please.</p> <p>First, please indicate your marital status</p>	<p>option 0: Single</p> <p>option 1: Married/Civil Partner</p> <p>option 2: Long-term relationship</p> <p>option 3: Divorced/Person whose Civil Partnership has been dissolved</p> <p>option 4: Widowed/Surviving Civil Partner</p> <p>option 5: Separated</p> <p>option 6: Prefer not to answer</p>
<b>C2</b>	How old are you?	<p>option 0: Under 16</p> <p>option 1: 16 - 24 years</p> <p>option 2: 25 - 34 years</p> <p>option 3: 35 - 44 years</p> <p>option 4: 45 - 54 years</p> <p>option 5: 55 - 64 years</p> <p>option 6: 65+</p>
<b>C3</b>	And which of these describes you best?	<p>option 0: Male</p> <p>option 1: Female</p> <p>option 2: Prefer to self-identify</p> <p>option 3: Prefer not to say</p>
<b>C4</b>	Do you have any children (16 or under) living with you?	<p>option 0: Yes</p> <p>option 1: No</p> <p>option 2: Prefer not to answer</p>
<b>C5</b>	And do you have any other adults living with you?	<p>option 0: Yes</p> <p>option 1: No</p> <p>option 2: Prefer not to say</p>
<b>C6</b>	Please select your highest educational level.	<p>option 0: Primary education (up to age 11)</p> <p>option 1: Secondary education (up to age 16)</p> <p>option 2: A-Levels, GNVQ or technical college</p>

		<p>option 3: Higher vocational education or HND</p> <p>option 4: University degree (Bachelor)</p> <p>option 5: Higher university degree (Master, Doctorate)</p> <p>option 6: None of these</p>
<b>C7</b>	How would you describe your neighbourhood?	<p>option 0: Urban (city / town centre)</p> <p>option 1: Town/Fringe</p> <p>option 2: Village/Hamlet/Isolated</p>
<b>C8</b>	Please click on the area to show where you live?	map using government region
<b>C9</b>	Which of the following best describes the chief income earner in your household?	
<b>C10</b>	Thank you. If you have any comments about this survey, please write them below.	