



**Childhood obesity and television food advertising –
Advertising of healthy eating to adolescents
guided by the principles of social marketing**

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of
the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2016

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Title: Childhood obesity and television food advertising – Advertising of healthy eating to adolescents guided by the principles of social marketing

Abstract

Aim: Drawing upon fundamental principles of social marketing, this thesis approached food advertising from the perspective of adolescents. Through development of in-depth consumer understanding, the aim was to establish how to advertise healthy eating in ways that would resonate with them.

Methodology: A three-year, longitudinal study was conducted with English and Swedish 12-14-year-olds. Using a social constructionist perspective, meaning was sought through an emphasis upon verbal and visual language. Varied and creative research methods explored their understanding of/relationship to food advertisements (focus groups/online discussion boards), perception of themselves as consumers (collage construction) and their own creative recommendations (advertisement design).

Findings: The study found adolescents' understanding of persuasive intent of food advertising to be still developing at age 12. When aged 14, the participants demonstrated unprompted criticism for a Coca-Cola advertisement. This criticism may have resulted from further consumer socialisation. Alternatively, the presence of a well-known brand for which the adolescents possessed both topic and agent knowledge may have enhanced their persuasion knowledge. However, 14-year-olds may remain vulnerable to persuasive attempts by less well-known brands. Adolescents' discretionary spending tends not to prioritise healthy options, with fast food brands often central to the acquisition of social experiences within a peer-context. In such situations, persuasion knowledge/health literacy may be less relevant. The healthy eating advertisements designed by the adolescents indicated the importance of strong, issue-relevant message arguments (e.g. detailing benefits of a healthy diet/dangers from an unhealthy diet).

Research limitations: Non-probability sampling means the findings remain specific to the particular fieldwork sites. The participant-designed advertisements represent concept ideas, with research investigating general reception of the message formats/advertising appeals needed to confirm their transferability.

Practical implications: Numerous recommendations for policy and practice of relevance to food advertising targeting adolescents are provided. For instance, it is recommended that the UK Government extends the Change4Life campaign to offer a brand specifically for adolescents encouraging healthy eating and exercise, informed by relational thinking associated with social marketing. Sweden should consider adopting Ofcom's ruling that HFSS (high fat/salt/sugar) advertising cannot target those under 16.

Originality: Contributions to social cognitive theory (SCT) and research methodology are provided. For instance, Bandura's (2004) model of SCT is extended to include key concepts of social marketing, providing a better fit with adolescents and healthy eating. A method of analysing consumer collages from a social constructionist perspective is introduced.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Dr Steve Oakes and Dr Philippa Hunter-Jones. Thank you very much for your expert advice, encouragement, patience and support throughout my work on this thesis.

I would like to acknowledge the commitment demonstrated to the study by pupils at Ormskirk School in England and Torpskolan in Sweden. I am grateful to Mrs Helen Brown and Mr Andrew Willis, Deputy Head Teachers at Ormskirk School, and Mr Anders Hurtig and Mrs Ingalill Kjellstrand, Head Teachers at Torpskolan, for supporting the study and assisting with practical arrangements. Mrs Gladys Axenhamn, Form Tutor at Torpskolan, enthusiastically and competently facilitated the third fieldwork stage – thank you.

I would like to thank my husband Ian and my sons William and Matthew for their support. It was William and Matthew, who sparked my interest in the subject area of advertising to children! Thank you for camping in the rain in the Lake District, so that I could have solitude to reflect and write the final sections.

Anna Maria Sherrington

September 2016

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Acronyms

BARB	Broadcasters' Audience Research Board
BCAP	The Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice
CAP	The Committee of Advertising Practice
Defra	The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
ELM	The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion
HFSS	High in fat, salt and/or sugar
ICC	The International Chamber of Commerce
NHS	The National Health Service
NNR	Nordic Nutrition Recommendations
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Ofcom	Office of Communications
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PHE	Public Health England
PKM	The Persuasion Knowledge Model
SACN	The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition
SCB	Statistiska Centralbyrån (Statistics Sweden)
SCT	Social cognitive theory
SEK	Swedish Krona (currency)
UNCRC	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO	The World Health Organization

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is set within the context of childhood obesity, a current global health epidemic. The obesity problem is complex, both in terms of its causes and the measures required to tackle it. The thesis addresses one component of the obesity challenge – television food advertising. The focus is on positive change; exploring how food advertising may be used to encourage healthy eating among adolescents. To this end, a three-year qualitative study was carried out with English and Swedish adolescents aged 12-14. These countries were selected in order for the study to benefit from the perspective of adolescents in two European countries, where levels of overweight/obesity differ (England high; Sweden lower) and there are differences in such areas as the healthiness of school lunches and legislation relating to television advertising. Consequently, it was of interest to explore whether such differences in the overall socio-structural context would indicate differences in adolescents' discourse surrounding healthy eating and food advertising, with implications for advertising promoting healthy eating. As for the age group, this is a time when young adolescents leave primary school and whilst still dependent upon family for main meals, they are experiencing increasing freedom to engage in discretionary food purchases. With their own money to spend, they are attractive targets for food producers' advertising initiatives. Concerning their ability to defend themselves against persuasive food advertising, the literature is inconclusive as to their ability to do so. For both nationalities, it was of interest to explore what their discourse at this life-stage suggests about their perception and assessment of food advertising and the role that it may play in their food selection.

Adolescents make decisions around food in environments characterised by both choice and contradiction. *The Great British Bake Off* final with an audience of more than 15 million viewers, making it the most-watched television show of 2015 (BBC newsbeat, 2015), was the last in a series of programmes providing family entertainment and depicting liberal use of sugar and fat. At the other end of the scale, the television documentary *What Britain Bought in 2015* (2015), reported spiralisers and NutriBullets amongst the biggest-selling items of the year, a reflection of a concurrent clean living trend. Food advertising seen on television is mostly for heavily promoted brands that are unhealthy. Fruit and vegetables, which tend to be unbranded, feature rarely. All this is happening within a food environment described as “dysfunctional”, where we are up against a “real juggernaut of unhealthy food” with the only way forward a re-orientation of the food environment (BBC Radio 4, 2016).

This chapter introduces the research study. It positions the study within the realm of social marketing and outlines the aim and objectives of the thesis within this frame. The chapter then addresses the research questions guiding the study. The rationale for the thesis is explained, followed by a brief account of the research methods. The contributions to knowledge made by the thesis are then identified. Finally, the structure of the thesis is outlined.

1.2 The research study

To date, the literature has mainly addressed negative aspects of food advertising with few studies addressing how advertising may be used in order to successfully promote healthy eating. This type of insight is highly relevant for young adolescents, who are in the process of developing their independence as young consumers and establishing habits that may carry on into adulthood.

1.2.1 Framing the thesis within the principles of social marketing

The World Health Organization (WHO) (2016) maintains that for younger children childhood obesity is not a result of voluntary lifestyle choices. The WHO argues that it is the responsibility of governments to address childhood obesity by providing public health guidance, education and establishing regulatory frameworks to address developmental and environmental risks and so support families' efforts to change behaviours. Kline (2011) recognises the challenges involved in addressing lifestyle risks legally distributed in the marketplace, such as those associated with fast food. Adults are generally informed consumers of fast food and so the lifestyle risks that they take must be understood as voluntary. The research population associated with this thesis – adolescent consumers aged 12-14 – fall somewhere in-between young children and adults, in that they have some discretion over snack foods that they purchase for their own consumption.

Recognising that food marketing is part of the obesity problem, Hastings *et al.* (2006) maintain that the removal of food marketing would not present the answer, but that making food marketing healthier would. Recognising that marketing success is dependent upon the voluntary co-operation of consumers and that an empowered consumer can force change, Hastings *et al.* (2006) propose that social marketing can encourage this empowerment. Accordingly, fundamental principles associated with social marketing underpin this thesis, as will be described next.

Hastings and Domegan (2014) propose four dimensions to a social marketing orientation (see figure 1.1). A *client orientation* is a prime directive, as successful behaviour change follows from a well-grounded understanding of people and their behaviour. Consumer insight needs to be complemented with a *creative orientation* providing the essential, motivating elements of imagination and innovation, simply because social marketers deal in voluntary behaviour. What is more, the use of a *collective orientation* recognises the importance of social determinants of behaviour – consumer behaviour is shaped by the surrounding context of people and the structures and policies of society. For instance, an adolescent's snack choices may be influenced by the social context of peers. Hastings and Domegan (2014) recognise the need for social marketing solutions to be multi-faceted, encouraging wider-scale social change, rather than simply individual behaviour. In the context of obesity, an individual can choose to tackle weight loss, but also has the freedom to do nothing. The presence of multiple choices represents competition for the social marketer. By adopting a *competitive orientation*, social marketers are reminded that consumers have a choice.

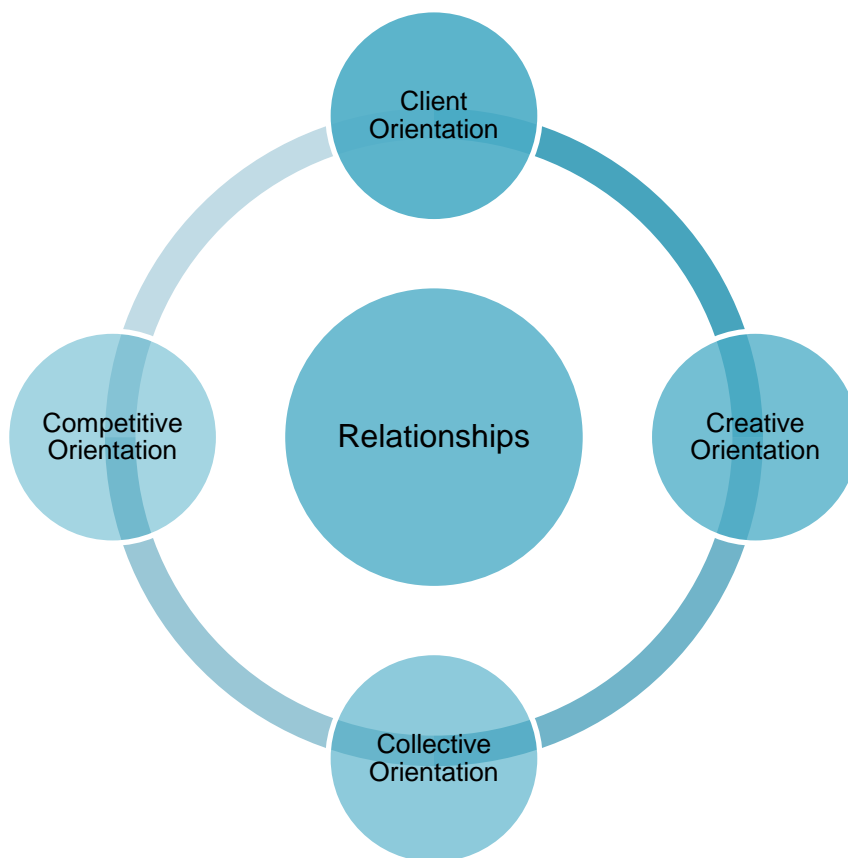


Figure 1.1: Strategic vision of social marketing (Hastings and Domegan, 2014, p. 44).

Hastings and Domegan (2014, p. 48) explain that the four orientations in figure 1.1 build upon the concept of *mutually beneficial exchange*. In this thesis, the marketing exchange is that of the practice of 'healthy eating'. In order to be able to "sell" this concept to young adolescents, food advertising must satisfy their needs. Taking their perspective, the thesis seeks to establish what the appropriate messages in food advertising should be in order to increase the chances of a "successful sale", i.e. the adoption of a healthy diet. Hastings and Domegan (2014) further explain that the four orientations take on the role of strategic drivers when combined with relational thinking and the requirement to engage with multiple stakeholders. Social marketing often addresses behaviours that demand long-term effort to change. Accordingly, adopting a good diet goes further than a simple exchange with a one-off adoption of a special offer. Rather, for some it involves lifestyle changes (Hastings and Saren, 2003) with the maintenance of a healthy approach to diet (repeat behaviour) critical to success (Andreasen, 2003). It follows that social marketing is a *process* for engaging people in social change. The implication is that complex social problems such as obesity can only be dealt with when people feel empowered to address them and live in social structures that enable them to do so (Hastings and Domegan, 2014).

1.2.2 Research aim

Inferring the current obesity challenge, Hastings and Domegan (2014, p. 38) propose that the principles of commercial marketing "work" for the food industry. It may be argued that the estimated £780 million spent on the advertising and marketing of food and drink in the UK in 2014 (PHE, 2015) provides evidence that food marketing is effective, as this money would not be spent otherwise. The literature review explores research evidence that food advertising for unhealthy foods influences children's *food preferences*, *purchase behaviour* and *consumption* (Hastings *et al.*, 2003). The majority of this research has been conducted from a quantitative perspective. Children's voices are rarely heard in the context of childhood obesity, although they are the main stakeholders. Calls have been made to re-orient the aim of research to assist the implementation of public policy associated with the promotion of healthy eating (Cairns *et al.*, 2013). This literature is under-developed (Boyland *et al.*, 2012; Cairns *et al.*, 2013) with few studies investigating what creative strategies may be appropriate for advertising healthy eating/foods. Informed by social marketing principles that a successful exchange depends upon client orientation and where behaviour – whether or not to engage in healthy eating – is voluntary (Hastings and Domegan, 2014), the aim of the thesis is:

The aim is to approach food advertising from the perspective of young adolescents. Adopting an interpretivist research philosophy, the thesis seeks to develop in-depth appreciation of this consumer group in order to understand how to advertise healthy eating to their age group in ways that will resonate with them.

Most available studies report on cross-sectional surveys and experiments, providing a snapshot of a particular point in time. This thesis reports on longitudinal research in two European countries, England and Sweden. The countries are geographically fairly close, but demonstrate differences, for instance in the legislative environment: Television advertising for foods high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) cannot target those younger than 16 in the UK, whereas no television advertising may target children younger than 12 in Sweden. There are also differences in the school food context, where all Swedish children are entitled to a free, healthy lunch. These contextual differences will mean that the participants approach the study from different perspectives, with implications for the discourses emerging. The age of 12 is of particular interest for the Swedish adolescents, in terms of whether not having been directly targeted by television advertising until then will signal delayed marketplace persuasion knowledge. It is envisaged that meeting with the same participants at three points in time with a year in-between each event, will allow the researcher to study their developing consumer socialisation.

1.2.3 Research objectives

The fieldwork and data analysis will be conducted from the ontological perspective of social constructionism (Hackley, 1998; 2001). Unlike the majority of studies associated with food advertising using a positivist approach, this study will explore the same realm as a social construction, with a central role played by language.

The literature review identifies strategic gaps in current knowledge associated with food advertising. Most research has addressed advertising of unhealthy foods and its effects, with few studies addressing advertising of healthy foods (Dixon *et al.*, 2007; Dias and Agante, 2011; Boyland *et al.*, 2012; Cairns *et al.*, 2013). Until recently, adolescents as consumers have received limited research attention (Chan *et al.*, 2011a; Scully *et al.*, 2012; Verhellen *et al.*, 2014) with the consequence that insight needed for the development of more effective communications targeting adolescents, such as their perceptions of healthy eating, socialisation agents and creative appeals, is lacking (Chan *et al.*, 2009a; 2009b; 2011b). Most research has been conducted from the objective perspective of the researcher (Sherry *et*

al., 1999; Preston, 2000; Chan *et al.*, 2009b). Given the social perspective of this thesis, where possible, the view-point of the adolescents, including a participant-centred approach in the fieldwork (Bartholomew and O'Donohue, 2003; Banister and Booth, 2005), will be used. In accordance with the *client orientation* of social marketing (Hastings and Domegan, 2014) and the application of a participant-centred approach (Bartholomew and O'Donohue, 2003; Banister and Booth, 2005), the first research objective is:

Objective 1: From the perspective of 12-14-year-old English and Swedish adolescents, investigate how they perceive themselves as consumers.

Given the social constructionist perspective, where *meaning* is perceived as a social construction and where reality is discursively constructed through *language* (Hackley, 1998), as well as the adoption of the *client* and *collective orientations* of social marketing (Hastings and Domegan, 2014), the second research objective is:

Objective 2: Identify and characterise the dominant discourses in relation to food advertising/healthy eating among adolescents aged 12-14 in England and Sweden.

It is envisaged that the research associated with this second objective will also address the *competitive orientation* of social marketing (Hastings and Domegan, 2014), recognising barriers to adopting a healthy diet.

As explored in the literature review, most studies investigating the creative approach used in food advertising lack qualitative analysis of the appeals identified. The thesis will address this research gap by asking research participants to evaluate existing advertisements (see objective 2), but also by letting them design their own advertisements, which will address objective 3. What is more, within food advertising there is a lack of research dealing with the visual. Accordingly, research methods will allow for the generation of visual data by the use of collage construction (to address objective 1) and the participants' use of images when designing their advertisements. Guided by the social constructionist perspective (Hackley, 1998; 2001), the principles of participant-centred research (Bartholomew and O'Donohue, 2003; Banister and Booth, 2005) and the *client*, *collective* and *creative orientations* of social marketing (Hastings and Domegan, 2014), the third objective is:

Objective 3: Ascertain what message formats and advertising appeals are appropriate to use in messages promoting healthy eating/foods to young adolescents. This will partly be based on creative contribution provided by the participants themselves.

Objective 4, in common with objective 3, addresses the lack of qualitative studies exploring creative appeals used in television food advertising:

Objective 4: Deliver qualitative insight into discourses employed within a small set of current television advertisements promoting healthy eating/living.

The discourse analysis will deal with both verbal and visual elements, addressing the lack of attention to visuals within the literature.

1.2.4 Research questions

On completion of the literature review, a list of research questions was drawn up (see table 1.1), which informed the research aim and objectives. Consequently, in accordance with a *client orientation* (Hastings and Domegan, 2014) and the adoption of the participants' perspective (Bartholomew and O'Donohue, 2003; Banister and Booth, 2005), the first question addresses the need to construct a profile of the consumer group. The second and third questions address aspects of consumer socialisation (Roedder John, 1999) and health literacy (Seaman *et al.*, 1997) as well as saliency and relevance of healthy eating to the age group.

1.	<i>How do English and Swedish adolescents describe themselves in terms of standard marketing segmentation variables?</i>
2.	<i>What is the importance and influence of various socialisation agents upon the food choice of the age group?</i>
3.	<i>What is the age group's understanding of 'healthy eating' and what importance do they place upon this concept?</i>
4.	<i>What is the relationship to and understanding of food advertising among the age group?</i>
5.	<i>What are these adolescents' reactions to and evaluations of a range of advertisements for healthy and unhealthy foods?</i>
6.	<i>Given the task of constructing their own advertising messages for their own age group, what creative ideas do they offer (copy, images, video, sound, etc.)?</i>
7.	<i>What are the similarities and differences between English and Swedish adolescents in terms of the above research questions?</i>

Table 1.1 Research questions associated with the study (Sherrington, 2016).

Question four deals with advertising literacy and the associated aspect of scepticism (Bousch *et al.*, 1994). This aspect is of special interest for the 12-year-old Swedish participants, as they have only just reached an age where they can be directly targeted by television advertising. Question five

addresses the lack of qualitative research into creative aspects of food advertising. The sixth question feeds directly into the third research objective – the consultation of adolescents for the development of creative strategies for advertising healthy eating/foods. Finally, question seven acknowledges the possibility of important differences (and similarities) between the nationalities.

1.3 Study rationale

The WHO has described childhood obesity as having reached “alarming proportions” in many countries, posing an “urgent and serious challenge” (2016, p. 8). Treating obesity and its consequences costs the NHS (the UK National Health Service) £5.1 billion every year (PHE, 2015). Obesity-related illnesses have been deemed to shorten the average life expectancy in Sweden for the first time and such illnesses cost the health service around SEK 6 billion (£514 million¹) per year (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2006). The financial cost aside, childhood obesity undermines the physical, social and psychological well-being of children. It is also a known risk factor for adult obesity and noncommunicable diseases (EU, 2014; WHO, 2016), highlighting the urgency of this problem.

The causes of obesity are likely to be manifold. Puggelli and Bertolotti (2014, p. 58) maintain that an increase in families’ income, longer working hours and more working mothers have brought about lifestyle changes, promoting a “new food culture” where ready meals, fast food and a variety of snacks are easily accessible. Figures charting the UK’s changing food-buying patterns since 1974 have been released by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra, 2016). For instance, reported purchases of potato chips were three times higher in 2014 than in 1974. Consumption of takeaway food has almost doubled during the same period, from 80g per person per week to 150g. Sales of takeaway pizza have increased by 1,000%. However, the last 40 years have also brought dietary improvements. For instance, average fruit consumption has increased by 50%. Sales of white bread have dropped by 75% and those of brown and wholemeal bread have increased by 85%. British households now drink four times more skimmed milk than whole-fat milk (Defra, 2016; Kelly and Bates, 2016). Within this “new food culture”, children have received increased control over their food consumption. The combination of a rapid transition from traditional foods grown in the community to modern urban diets and increased sedentary behaviour is also thought to explain the world’s weight gain (Boseley and Davidson, 2015).

¹ All currency conversions have been conducted using the May 2016 guidance to monthly exchange rates published by HM Revenue and Customs (2016).

By continuously scanning the environment, marketers respond to changes in lifestyles by designing their marketing mixes to match. Hastings *et al.* (2006) recognise that food marketing in terms of the whole marketing mix is likely to contribute to the obesity epidemic. The thesis focuses upon television advertising and as demonstrated in the literature review, sufficient research evidence exists to suggest it contributes to obesity.

1.4 Research methods

The thesis adopts an interpretivist orientation. The research methods are designed in the spirit of Hackley's (1998; 2001) ideas on *social constructionism*, which incorporate the guiding principle that *meaning* is a social construction discursively constructed through *language* (Hackley, 1998). De la Ville and Tartas (2010) propose that marketing research should focus on children's use of everyday language to deliver understanding of their development into independent consumers. Moisander and Valtonen (2006) explain that it is through text, talk, sounds, images and signifying practices that meaning is discursively constructed in social interaction. Hence, the fieldwork will allow for the generation of verbal and visual data.

A social constructionist perspective involves framing the research from those who experience marketing (Hackley, 2001). Using the notion of the *competent child* where a child is viewed as socially and culturally constructed (Prout and James, 1997), the research participants will be given the role of "co-creators of knowledge" (Kellett, 2014, p. 24). The research will adopt a longitudinal approach, following the same group of English and Swedish adolescents from the age of 12 to 14. This approach will allow the participants to engage in increasingly challenging data construction tasks with each year and allow some insight into how they develop as consumers. Consequently, in the stage of the exploratory research, the participants will be aged 12. During this stage, they will engage in a repertoire of advertising-related activities within focus groups. This stage will explore concepts associated with their role as young consumers and their perception of food advertising in various media. During the second stage of the study, the participants will be 13. This stage will give the participants the opportunity to profile themselves as consumers, constructing consumer collages using images and words. In the third stage, the participants will be 14. This stage will involve two activities. In the first activity, the research participants will evaluate television advertisements promoting healthy eating. In the second activity, they will design their own advertisements promoting healthy eating to their age group. The characteristics of the research methods are summarised in figure 1.2.

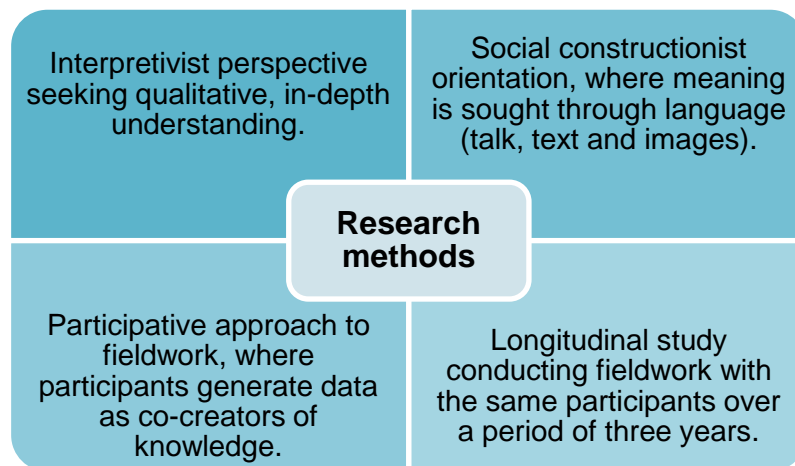


Figure 1.2: Key characteristics of the research methods (Sherrington, 2016).

1.5 Contributions to knowledge

A key contribution is articulated within the research aim, namely that the empirical research will be conducted from the adolescents' perspective. Consequently, the research intends to give voice to the adolescents in their position as a primary stakeholder group in the obesity debate. Additionally, the thesis makes contributions to academic theory and research methodology, as well as delivers recommendations for policy and practice (see figure 1.3). A brief overview is provided below, with a fuller account in chapter 10.

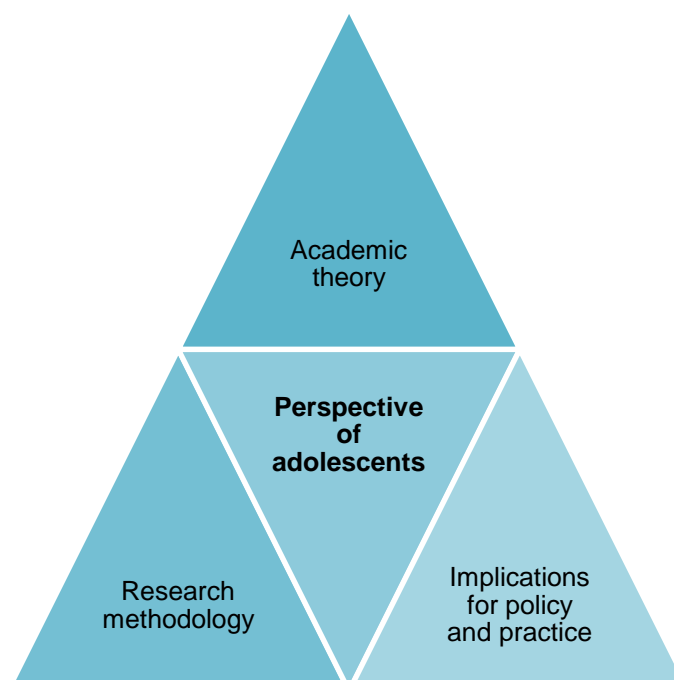


Figure 1.3: Contributions to knowledge (Sherrington, 2016).

1.5.1 Contributions to academic theory

Contributions to social cognitive theory: The thesis extends Bandura's (2004) model of social cognitive theory, making it better able to explain behaviour change within the context of adolescents and healthy eating. It does so by incorporating key principles of social marketing. The extended model provides a consumer-oriented and strategic approach to behaviour change by incorporating such key concepts as *relational thinking* (Hastings and Saren, 2003), *time* and *reinforcement*. Further, the extended model recognises that successful behaviour change is contingent upon a *mutually beneficial exchange* (Hastings and Domegan, 2014). Additionally, the model stipulates that adolescents' self-efficacy for behaviour change needs prompting with *saliency* and *relevancy* of the concept of healthy eating.

Contributions to persuasion theory: Some of the thesis findings are of relevance to theories associated with dual routes to persuasion. The thesis does not directly examine the utility of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) in explaining adolescents' processing of advertising. However, the advertisements for healthy eating designed by the participants tend to encourage elaboration upon a strong, health-related argument. The findings allow exploration of the applicability of the ELM to adolescent consumers and refute recommendations in the literature that on the basis that the approach adopted by HFSS advertising of using peripheral cues appears to work, advertising for healthy foods may adopt similar strategies (e.g. Folta *et al.*, 2006; Kelly *et al.*, 2006; Dias and Agante, 2011; Puggelli and Bertolotti, 2014).

Contributions to consumer socialisation theory: By virtue of the longitudinal perspective, the research indicates that persuasion knowledge is still developing between the ages 12 and 14. It was established that not all 12-year-olds fully appreciate *persuasive intent*, making them vulnerable to television advertising for unhealthy foods. The thesis proposes that unprompted scepticism at the age of 14 may be brand-enabled and applicable to a well-known, global brand, with the possibility that adolescents remain vulnerable to less well-known brands. Further, the findings suggest that the Swedish 12-year-olds demonstrate marketplace persuasion knowledge of a similar level to the English 12-year-olds, indicating that a Swedish advertising ban for children under 12 does not delayed their consumer socialisation.

1.5.2 Contributions to research methodology

Contribution to collage construction methodology: The thesis demonstrates how collage construction may be used within a social constructionist

perspective in order to develop deep participant-centred consumer insight. Importantly, the thesis describes a hermeneutic approach to collage analysis. This represents a contribution within the collage construction literature, which has been criticised for its lack of guidance provided for collage interpretation (Pachler, 2014).

Contribution towards digital research methodology: The thesis demonstrates how the online discussion wall of Padlet can be used effectively with young adolescents, providing a safe, free-of-charge platform that can be used cross-nationally.

1.5.3 Implications for policy and practice

The thesis provides a large number of recommendations for policy and practice of relevance to all major stakeholders with an interest in adolescents and food advertising. For instance, on the basis of the findings demonstrating importance of translating complex, health-related messages into easy-to-understand communications, it is recommended that visualisation of information should be used to enable informed choice and that this should be incorporated as a requirement into the British Code of Advertising Practice (BCAP) (BCAP, 2010). Further, the thesis recommends that the UK Government extends the Change4Life campaign to offer a brand that resonates with adolescents, with the objective of encouraging healthy eating and exercise. This would invoke the relational thinking associated with social marketing (Hastings and Saren, 2003) and which is a key component of the extended model of social cognitive theory proposed by the thesis. What is more, based on the finding that 14-year-old adolescents remain vulnerable to advertising for unhealthy foods, it is recommended that Sweden adopts the Ofcom (2007) regulation regarding HFSS advertising, where such advertising may not target those under the age of 16.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organised into 10 chapters (see table 1.2). Chapter 2 provides essential background to the study and so explores the obesity epidemic, the study countries, children in their role as young consumers and television as an advertising medium. Chapter 3 reviews the literature associated with social marketing, behaviour change and persuasion, before reviewing the literature on consumer socialisation and then the literature relating to television food advertising. Chapter 4 discusses the research methodology and justifies the interpretivist perspective of the thesis. Chapter 5 presents a discourse analysis of television advertisements promoting healthy food/living.

The findings from the exploratory research are delivered in chapter 6. Chapter 7 presents the consumer collage research. Chapter 8 deals with the participants' evaluations of television advertisements and analyses their healthy eating advertisements. Chapter 9 provides a discussion of the overall findings. Chapter 10 delivers the overall conclusion, summarises the contributions to knowledge, recognises the limitations and provides recommendations for future research.

Chapter 1:

- Introduction

Chapter 2:

- Background

Chapter 3:

- Literature review

Chapter 4:

- Research methodology

Chapter 5:

- Television advertisements promoting healthy living - what is the message?

Chapter 6:

- Adolescent consumers' discourse around food and food advertising

Chapter 7:

- Adolescent consumer profiling through collages

Chapter 8:

- Adolescents' perceptions of healthy living advertisements and their own designs of healthy eating advertisements

Chapter 9:

- Overall findings: Advertising of healthy eating guided by social cognitive theory and socila marketing

Chapter 10:

- Conclusions and the way ahead

Table 1.2: Thesis chapters.

Chapter 2 Background

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets the scene for the literature review and subsequent fieldwork by reviewing key concepts in relation to the obesity epidemic, England and Sweden as study countries, children in their role as consumers and the medium of television (see figure 2.1).



Figure 2.1: Key background concepts.

2.2 What is obesity? What are healthy and unhealthy foods?

Overweight and obesity are based on body mass index (BMI) calculations using an individual's height and weight. Children who are overweight or obese have a BMI above a set of age- and gender-specific cut-off points (Cole *et al.*, 2000). Overweight and obesity are a direct consequence of eating and drinking more calories and using up too few (HM Government, 2011). The *EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2014-2020* recognises the seriousness of increasing overweight and obesity among European children, as a strong link has been identified between excess weight and detrimental health and psychosocial outcomes in adulthood (EU, 2014). Potential immediate effects include negative influences upon children's physical, social and psychological well-being (WHO, 2016).

The *Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity* (see section 2.4.2) defines healthy foods as "foods that contribute to healthy diets if consumed in appropriate amounts". Unhealthy foods are those that are high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars or salt (i.e. energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods) (WHO, 2016, p. 7).

2.3 Life in an obesogenic environment

The *Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity* defines an *obesogenic environment* as "an environment that promotes high energy intake and sedentary behaviour". Possibly at the extreme end, London schools have on average 25 fast food outlets in the vicinity, with schools in Tower Hamlets

(area of London) having as many as 42 (BBC Radio 4, 2016). With globalisation and urbanisation, exposure to the obesogenic environment is increasing across all socio-economic groups in high-, middle- and low-income countries. Children consume foods that are ultra-processed, energy-dense and nutrient-poor that are cheap and readily available. Additionally, children spend less time being physically active as a result of an increase in screen-based and sedentary leisure activities, as well as travelling to school by car. These conditions have led to an energy imbalance, with children consuming more calories than their bodies require (WHO, 2016, p. 7).

The NHS argues that the future health of British children depends upon a radical upgrade in the prevention of avoidable disease. Consequently, one of the proposals in the *Five Year Forward View of the NHS* (NHS, 2014) addresses the obesogenic environment and proposes the development of “new towns” (p. 35), where new town developments and regeneration of some urban areas offer the opportunity to design healthy environments. At the time of writing, the NHS (2016) has announced plans to create ten NHS-supported “healthy new towns” across England with the aim to “design out the obesogenic environment and design in health and well-being”, with features including fast-food free zones near schools, green spaces enabling safe outdoor play and the opportunity to walk/cycle to school.

It is probably safe to argue that McDonald’s has successfully contributed to a global obesogenic environment. Describing themselves as “the pioneers of the drive-thru concept” (see image 2.1) and claiming to be “the UK and the world leader in this sector”, this concept is the key focus for their growth in the UK (McDonald’s UK, 2016). Offering a pure representation of an obesogenic environment, customers are not required to step outside of their cars in order to obtain their food. McDonald’s delivers an ultimate level of convenience, with a menu that caters to all main meals and restaurants open 24 hours a day worldwide. The Golden Arches logo leads the way to a McDonald’s restaurant using giant “map pins” in the urban landscape, reminding the locals of its existence and directing travellers unfamiliar with the area (see image 2.2).



Image 2.1: McDonald's drive-thru restaurant (photograph: Sherrington, 2016).



Image 2.2: The McDonald's map pin in the urban typography (photograph: Sherrington, 2016).

2.4 The obesity epidemic and plans of action

This section provides an overview of the development of the obesity epidemic and reviews frameworks in place to tackle it. The review proceeds by first exploring initiatives introduced by the WHO, followed by actions taken by the European Union (EU) and then policy in the UK and Sweden (see figure 2.2). At the time of writing, a UK referendum has voted in favour of leaving the EU. EU level arrangements have had implications for the UK and will continue to be of relevance to Sweden.



Figure 2.2: Global framework for addressing childhood obesity (Sherrington, 2016).

2.4.1 Development of an obesity epidemic

Kline (2011) charts how concerns about overweight, first publicly recognised in the late 1990s, have developed into the current childhood obesity debate. The analysis is delivered within Beck's (1992) theory of a Risk Society. In a context of "lifestyle risk analysis" (Kline, 2011, xiv), Kline explores how anxieties about children's health and uncertainty about who is responsible for their risky lifestyle choices reintroduce debates about commercial television as an "environmental health hazard" (p. 6). The subject of parents' anxiety – obesity – was classified a *global epidemic* by the WHO in their report *Obesity: Preventing and Managing the Global Epidemic*, in the year 2000. At that time, obesity was replacing under-nutrition and infectious disease as the

most significant contributor to ill health (WHO, 2000). In their report *Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases*, the WHO (2003) identifies the heavy marketing of fast food outlets and energy-dense, micronutrient-poor foods and drinks as causative of obesity.

Kline's extensive analysis of UK and US news coverage of childhood overweight/obesity from 1997 to 2007, leads him to propose that children's obesogenic lifestyles have brought about a "reversal in the progressive project of childhood" (Kline, 2011, p. xiv), reintroducing the *vulnerable child consumer*. The mediated marketplace promotes risk-taking through its food advertising. The acknowledgement that child consumers are insufficiently capable of informed consent to lifestyle risk-taking led to a legislated ban on television advertising for HFSS foods (foods high in fat, salt or sugar, labelled "risky foods" [p. 84] by Kline) targeting children younger than 16 in the UK (further explored in section 3.8.2).

2.4.2 The World Health Organization

The WHO remains the foremost authority on childhood obesity. Delivering a comprehensive response to childhood obesity, the WHO established the *Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity* in 2014. Its remit is raising the awareness of and building momentum for tackling childhood obesity. In a recent report (WHO, 2016), the Commission puts forward an integrated package of recommendations, calling on governments to take leadership and all stakeholders to recognise their moral responsibility to contribute to reducing the epidemic. Out of the recommendations, that of promoting intake of healthy foods is most relevant to this thesis, in particular objective 1.3 to "implement the *Set of Recommendations on the Marketing of Foods and Non-alcoholic Beverages to Children* to reduce the exposure of children and adolescents to, and the power of, the marketing of unhealthy foods" (p. 10). The report claims that despite an increasing number of voluntary industry efforts, exposure to marketing of unhealthy foods remains a major issue.

2.4.3 European initiatives to tackle childhood obesity

The *EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2014-2020* was adopted in 2014 (EU, 2014). It is in line with WHO political frameworks (WHO, 2014) and the priority actions of the *Vienna Declaration on Nutrition and Noncommunicable Diseases in the Context of Health 2020* (WHO, 2013a). The *Vienna Declaration* involved member states committing to decisive action to prevent and deal with overweight and obesity, requiring whole-of-government, whole-of-society and health-in-all policies.

The *EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity* (EU, 2014) recognises that obesity has more than tripled in many European countries since the 1980s, with childhood overweight/obesity of particular concern. The overarching goal of the *EU Action Plan* is to contribute to “halting the rise in overweight and obesity in children and young people (0-18 years) by 2020” (EU, 2014, p. 8). The *EU Action Plan* states that “defining national health policies remains the exclusive competence of Member States” and as such “European level health policy exists to help develop shared goals and to assist with coordinating national policies” (EU, 2014, p. 9). The *EU Action Plan* is based on eight key areas for action, which include the objectives to *promote healthier environments, especially in locations such as schools; make the healthy option the easier option* (e.g. through reformulation of less healthy foods and recognition of nutritional objectives when defining taxation) and *restrict marketing and advertising to children*.

The *EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health* (EU, 2005) encourages stakeholders to make commitments in such areas as marketing, food reformulation, food distribution, catering and physical activity, with children priority targets. Its purpose is to provide a European-level forum for sharing plans of action against obesity as well as outcomes/experiences, so that over time, evidence of what is effective can be assembled. The fields for action include marketing and advertising.

2.4.4 Policy on the national level – the cases of the UK and Sweden

In 2010, the UK Government published its long-term strategy for the future of public health in England in the White Paper *Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our Strategy for Public Health in England* (HM Government, 2010). It details the national level action to tackle obesity, which includes the continuance of the *National Child Measurement Programme* (Health and Social Care Information Centre, 2015a), helping consumers make healthier food choices through the *Change4Life* programme and working with business and other partners through the *Public Health Responsibility Deal* (see section 2.5.1). *Change4Life* is the Government’s flagship programme for preventing childhood obesity. Launched in 2009, it is a society-wide movement that encourages people to eat well and move more (PHE, 2014b). In response to the White Paper, *Healthy Lives, Healthy People: A Call to Action on Obesity in England* (HM Government, 2011) sets out the UK Government’s strategies for a “sustained downward trend in the level of excess weight in children by 2020” (p. 8). These strategies seek to empower individuals through the provision of encouragement (e.g. through *Change4Life*), involving the food and drink industry through the *Responsibility Deal*, handing local government

the lead role in driving health improvement and building the evidence base to spread good practice.

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) advises Public Health England and other UK Government organisations on nutrition and health-related matters (SACN, no date). Current recommendations include the *5-a-day programme* (consumption of at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day) (NHS Choices, no date). What is more, the *Eatwell Guide* (PHE, 2016) is a policy tool used to define Government recommendations and provide a visual representation of eating healthily and achieving a balanced diet. Additionally, in 2014, Public Health England (PHE, 2014c) published *Everybody Active, Every Day*, a framework aiming to increase levels of physical activity in local communities.

In August 2016, the UK Government published its Childhood Obesity Strategy (HM Government, 2016). The strategy centres on a sugar tax (see 2.5.1), voluntary actions by the food industry to cut sugar by 20% by 2020 and provisions for the encouragement of exercise among primary school children. The long-awaited strategy has been described as “weak” by medical experts and campaigners, as it does not deliver a ban on price-cutting promotions of HFSS foods or restrictions on HFSS advertising during family television shows, measures recommended by Public Health England (Boseley, 2016, p. 2; Pym, 2016; Smyth, 2016; Swinford, 2016). Crucially for adolescents, the strategy appears to prioritise young children, with no specific measures to safeguard older children, whose increasing independence may make them vulnerable to HFSS advertising.

The researcher contacted the offices of Gabriel Wikström, the Swedish Minister for Health Care, Public Health and Sport for a Swedish policy on childhood obesity, but was referred to the Public Health Agency of Sweden (Häyrynen, 2016). The Public Health Agency of Sweden advised that national obesity prevention in Sweden is an integral part of general public health initiatives to promote a healthy lifestyle (Friberg, 2016). Hence, Sweden does not have a specific policy document on tackling childhood obesity.

The overarching aim of Swedish public health policy emanates from the national objective of creating societal pre-requisites for good health on equal terms for everyone. Accordingly, the starting point for all public health efforts is a list of eleven objective domains for public health adopted by Parliament in 2003. *Conditions during childhood and adolescence; health-promoting living environments* and *good eating habits* represent three of the domains (Swedish National Institute of Public Health, 2013). Recognising the presence of socio-economic differences in general health and obesity, the *Commission for Equity in Health* was established in 2015 with its remit to

close avoidable health gaps within one generation (Commission for Equity in Health, 2016). Detailed dietary guidelines are issued by the National Food Agency that aims to assist people to “eat greener, not too much and be active” (National Food Agency, no date). Swedish recommendations for an optimal diet are based on the joint *Nordic Nutrition Recommendations* (NNR), part of the Nordic action plan for “a better life through diet and physical activity”. The NNR has been published every eight years since 1980 (NNR 2012 is the fifth and most recent edition) and is influenced by relevant research within the field of nutrition (Nordic Council of Ministers, no date).

2.5 The discursive context

Figure 2.3 depicts key stakeholder groups with an interest in issues associated with food and overweight/obesity. Available discourses are numerous and frequently contradictory, making the discursive context complex. It is within this context that food advertising takes place. This section focuses further on policy and relevant discourses, first in the UK and then in Sweden.

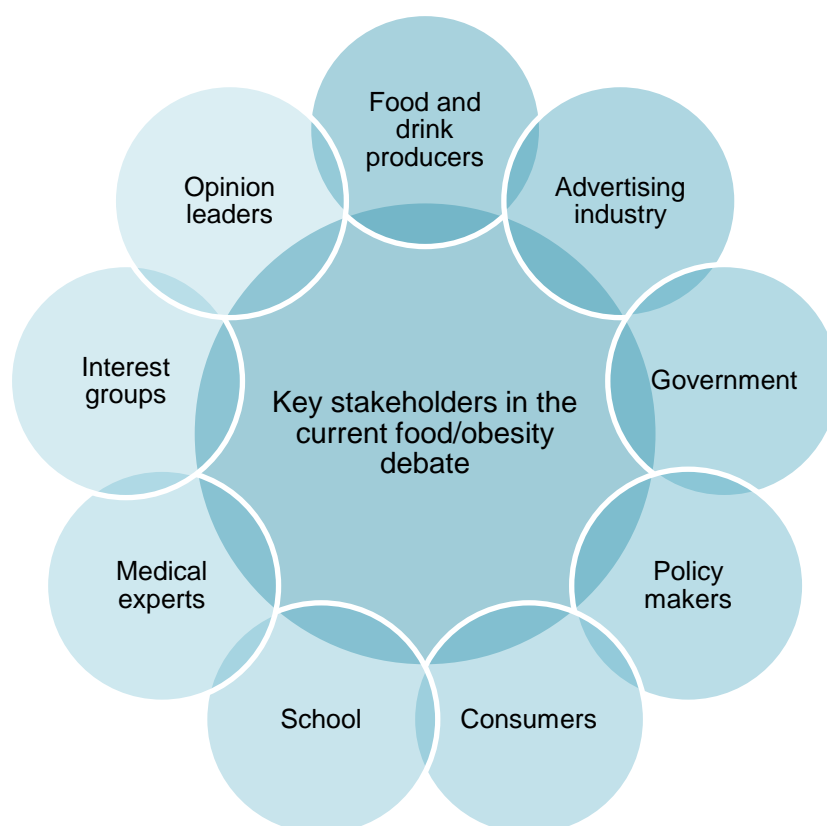


Figure 2.3: Key stakeholders in the current food/obesity debate (Sherrington, 2016).

2.5.1 *The discursive context of the UK*

In 2016, the UK Government announced a soft drinks industry levy payable by producers and importers of soft drinks containing added sugar. Implemented from April 2018, the levy will be charged on volumes according to total sugar content (HM Treasury, 2016, 2.157). The build-up to the announcement included a recommendation by SACN that the average population intake of sugar should not exceed 5% of total dietary energy (halving the previous recommendation) and the consumption of sugar sweetened drinks to be minimised by all age groups (BBC News 2015a; PHE, 2015). In their report *Sugar Reduction – The Evidence for Action*, prepared for the Department of Health, Public Health England (PHE, 2015) calls for sugar reduction in everyday food and drink, a sugar tax (endorsed by the British Medical Association [Gallagher, 2015]) and the removal of buy-one-get-one-free offers, as well as less marketing aimed at children in store, on television and online. Further, PHE requests a rebalancing of promotions with a shift away from high sugar towards healthier foods. Additionally, the House of Commons Health Select Committee (made up of elected members from across the political parties) are in favour of extending the 9pm television watershed² to apply to HFSS foods. The Health Select Committee has also called for food manufacturers to label single portions of products containing added sugar to display sugar content in teaspoons (BBC News 2015b). The PHE launched a £5m ‘Sugar Smart’ campaign in January 2016 with the aim to encourage parents to select healthier options for their children. A mobile app that lets parents scan product barcodes to reveal the amount of sugar in cubes and grams in everyday foods and drinks is central to the campaign (Bold and Ghosh, 2016).

The Advertising Association has described the views of the Health Select Committee as reflecting a “narrow medical perspective”. They claim that UK food advertising is amongst the most strictly regulated in the world and fulfils an important role informing and educating consumers (BBC News, 2015b; Oakes, 2015; Advertising Association, no date). Opposed to a sugar tax on the basis of insufficient international evidence of its effectiveness, the Food and Drink Federation and the British Soft Drinks Association claim already to have removed millions of calories from the food chain by reformulated recipes and smaller pack sizes (BBC News, 2015b; Ghosh, 2016). It has been argued that the sugar levy misses the “real point” that obesity results from a general over-consumption of calories. Pure fruit juice, milk-based drinks and sugary foods are unaffected – let alone fatty foods such as chips (Gwynn, 2016a; Marsden, 2016). As sugary drinks are the biggest source of

² The *watershed* means the time when television programmes unsuitable for children can be broadcast. Its purpose is to protect children from harmful material. It starts at 9pm and finishes at 5.30am (Ofcom, no date).

sugar in British children's diets, health advocates see the levy as a significant step in the fight against childhood obesity (Gwynn, 2016b; Triggles, 2016).

The Department of Health claims that as the causes of obesity are complex – dietary, lifestyle, environmental and genetic – addressing the problem requires a comprehensive approach (Triggles, 2015). To this end, the current Government has favoured an industry-led approach towards the reformulation of foods and drinks. Through the *Public Health Responsibility Deal*, businesses and other influential organisations sign up voluntarily to making a significant contribution to improving public health by creating an environment where consumers are empowered to make informed, balanced choices that will help them lead healthier lives (Department of Health, no date a). Businesses can sign up to a number of *food pledges*, for instance improving the nutritional content of food, increasing the availability and promotion of healthier food choices and providing consistent information to consumers (Department of Health, no date b).

Interest groups drive initiatives associated with childhood obesity. The *Children's Food Campaign* works to improve young people's health and well-being through lobbying for better food and food education in schools, protection of children from "junk food" marketing as well as clear food labelling accessible to children. Current campaigns include a petition calling on the Government to close loopholes allowing HFSS foods to be advertised to children on television (Children's Food Campaign, 2016). The *National Obesity Forum* has warned that a claim that half of the UK population will be overweight by 2050 may underestimate the issue and has called for new awareness campaigns, with children's well-being in particular need of attention (Dutta, 2014). The Chief Medical Officer, Dame Sally Davies, has claimed that "being overweight has become the new normal in England", with three quarters of parents not recognising weight problems in their children (Triggles, 2014). Children themselves appear silent in the matter – their voices are absent in the material accessed in order to provide this overview of the UK discursive context.

Future Thinking (a research agency) conducted a survey investigating UK consumers' attitudes ahead of the introduction of the sugar tax. The survey found nearly half (49%) of consumers to oppose it, 34% in favour and 17% uncertain. Among the under-18s, 44% were against and 34% in favour. The research suggested that consumers are unaware of how a sugar tax will be implemented, the types of products affected and the potential impact on consumers' shopping habits (Bold, 2015). During the spring of 2015, the BBC broadcast a number of documentaries exploring 'the truth' about sugar, calories and fat with a clear educational aim, followed by *The Truth About Healthy Eating* in summer of 2016 (The Truth About, 2015; 2016). *Action on*

Sugar aims to help people avoid hidden sugars and lobbies food manufacturers to reduce sugar in food (BBC News, 2014). Following the Government's announcement of the sugar levy, media immediately took up their agenda setting role, including the task of awareness building of the new levy and how it works (e.g. Triggles, 2016).

In 2005, Jamie Oliver gained public support for his *Feed Me Better* campaign calling for an overhaul of British school meals (Revill and Hill, 2005). The Government responded by announcing plans to replace nutrient-poor, processed foods with fresh, local and, where possible, organic meals and the setting up of an independent *Children's Food Trust* (Hinsliff and Hill, 2005). Claiming a decade later that the campaign has not succeeded because "eating well is still viewed as an indulgence of the middle classes" (Furness, 2015), Oliver lobbied the Government actively for the introduction of the sugar tax (Triggles, 2015). In order to educate the public and put pressure on the Government, Oliver worked with Channel 4 to produce a documentary entitled *Jamie's Sugar Rush* (2015), broadcast in September 2015 (Boseley, 2015).

2.5.2 *The discursive context of Sweden*

The Swedish Government signed the *WHO European Charter on counteracting obesity* in 2006, involving a commitment to placing obesity prevention high on the political agenda. The *Charter* outlines a range of principles, among them that children should receive special attention and their inexperience and credulity should not be exploited by commercial interests (WHO, 2006, paragraph 2.3.7). Further, the private sector has an important role to play in building a healthier environment by actively promoting healthier options (paragraph 2.4.4). What is more, in February 2015, Sweden announced that the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC; UNICEF, 1989) will become Swedish law (Government Offices of Sweden, 2015a). This formalises Sweden's commitment to safeguarding children's well-being, as article 24 of the UNCRC recognises "the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health" (UNICEF, 1989).

The prognosis for overweight/obesity in Sweden is worrying. According to the WHO, if current trends continue, 56% of women and 71% of men are expected to be classed as obese or overweight in 2030 (Svenska Dagbladet, 2015). Projections for the UK indicate 64% of women and 74% of men will be obese/overweight by 2030 (Meikle, 2015). Sweden's Minister for Public Health has confirmed that the Government is not considering an "unhealthy foods tax". Described as a class-based issue, the focus is on closing of

“health gaps” in society through improved labour market conditions, education and access to sports (Government Offices of Sweden, 2015b).

The *Audiovisual Media Services Directive* (European Parliament, Council of the European Union, 2010) specifies that in order to ensure the free movement of broadcasts between EU member states, the ‘country of origin principle’ applies. This means that the originating member state should verify that a broadcast complies with national law (paragraphs 33, 34 and 36). Consequently, Sweden can only regulate television channels that broadcast from within Sweden. However, the Swedish Consumers’ Association (a not-for-profit, politically independent consumer organisation representing consumer interests) insists on safeguarding the Swedish ban on television advertising targeting children under the age of 12 (as this law has been questioned in the context of the EU [Nordic Council of Ministers, 2008]). What is more, the Consumers’ Association proposes that brand owners take greater responsibility for encouraging children to eat healthily. Similarly to the UK, the Consumers’ Association proposes voluntary initiatives (rather than legislation) to improve the nutritional profile of products and ensure that marketing is fair and appropriate (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2008).

The Swedish food industry claims to have responded to the obesity epidemic through reducing fat, salt and sugar in products. The Swedish Food Federation (a federation of approximately 800 Swedish food producers) sets out its guiding principles for nutrition in the document *Food for Health and Well-being*. For instance, members commit to providing foods that enable consumers to select a tasty, varied and healthy diet. Further, members commit to responsible marketing, especially for foods intended for children (Swedish Food Federation, 2008).

In their *Guide to Marketing to Children and Youth*, the Swedish Consumer Agency (a government agency safeguarding consumer interests, whose work is directed by the Government and the Parliament) (2014) presents rules and practices for food marketing. Drawing on the Swedish Marketing Act (Swedish Riksdag, 2008) and the *Framework for Responsible Food and Beverage Marketing Communications* of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) (ICC, 2012), the *Guide* stipulates the basic requirement that the receiver (the child) should be able to identify the source (the brand owner) of a commercial message and appreciate that it is a marketing message. Concerning food, the *Guide* states that marketing should not undermine the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Any statements regarding nutritional content and health benefits should be substantiated by scientific evidence. What is more, statements should recognise a child’s perspective. Marketing should not suggest that a product provides enhanced status or popularity with peers or leads to sporting success. Swedish Advertisers (Sweden’s largest industry association of advertisers) actively promote

industry self-regulation as more effective than legislation for dealing with unethical advertising (Swedish Advertisers, no date). Contrary to television advertising in the UK, where all advertisements must be cleared by Clearcast ahead of broadcast (BCAP, 2010, section 1; Clearcast, 2016), in accordance with the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression (Swedish Constitution, 1991:1469, chapter 1, article 3) television advertisements in Sweden are scrutinised once broadcast. Pre-vetting would be considered as censorship and in breach of the Swedish Constitution (Andersson, 2016).

The Co-operative Society Stockholm (part of the co-operative movement, its main task is to strengthen members' position as consumers) has carried out a number of studies with its family panel, investigating parents' views on marketing targeting children. One study found 87% of parents to be negative to marketing of unhealthy foods to children. Around half believed that there should be no marketing to children. The other half approved of marketing, provided it promotes healthy food and drink (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2006). Research with English and Swedish parents investigating their attitudes towards advertising targeting children, found that Swedish parents tend to disapprove of advertising more than their British counterparts. Both nationalities were found to believe that children are more likely than adults to be deceived by advertising (Young *et al.*, 2003).

The school lunch is an important concept in Sweden, with every pupil legally entitled to a free school lunch. More than SEK 5 billion (£429 million) is spent on school catering every year; more than what is invested in educational materials and library resources. In 2011, legislation was introduced demanding that school meals fulfil stipulated nutritional requirements (National Food Agency, 2013). However, during the last decade, school lunches have been subject to intensive media scrutiny and critique, largely due to increased reliance on ready-prepared meals. This has initiated a process of improvement, with increasing emphasis on sustainability and locally sourced foods (Livsmedelsakademin, 2015).

2.6 Obesity – a current issue

Table 2.1 demonstrates the result of a simple search on “childhood obesity” conducted in Scopus, covering the time-span 1995 to 2015. (Scopus is the largest available abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature [Elsevier B. V., 2016]). It is evident that the number of publications rose during the start of this century, following the declaration by the WHO (2000) of obesity as a global epidemic, with a sharp rise in publications from around 2010. Despite a small decline in the number of items published in 2015, the

general term of “childhood obesity” still featured in a large number of publications.

<i>Year of publication</i>	<i>Number of publications</i>
•2015	•1,546
•2014	•1,709
•2013	•1,601
•2012	•1,125
•2011	•816
•2010	•669
•2009	•460
•2008	•503
•2007	•409
•2006	•335
•2005	•259
•2004	•205
•2003	•138
•2002	•120
•2001	•91
•2000	•94
•1999	•53
•1998	•44
•1997	•40
•1996	•26
•1995	•33

Table 2.1: Number of publications containing the key phrase “childhood obesity” in Scopus 1995-2015 (Elsevier B. V., 2016).

With a continuous stream of news reports, some with quite striking headlines, mass media are fulfilling an important agenda-setting function (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) by establishing obesity as an important issue requiring attention. Concurrently, media are educating the public about key aspects of the epidemic. Figure 2.4 displays headlines carried by English and Swedish news media in the last few years. The selection is arbitrary with the simple purpose of illustrating the framing of headlines in authoritative news titles.



Figure 2.4: Agenda setting in UK and Swedish news media.

2.7 The study countries – England and Sweden

England and Sweden were selected as study countries, due to a range of differences their *communication* and *consumption contexts* (Livingstone and Helsper, 2004).

In terms of the *communication context*, England and Sweden demonstrate two important differences. In Sweden, children under the age of 12 may not be targeted with television advertising. In the UK, advertising for HFSS foods and drinks may not be shown on children's channels or be positioned in and around programmes that have a high proportion of children viewers under the age of 16 (explored further in 3.6.2 and 3.8.2). It was of particular interest to find out whether the Swedish advertising ban had implications for the 12-year-old Swedish participants' developing consumer socialisation.

Further, there are differences in the *consumption context* (see 2.7.2), which means that the everyday context in which the adolescents receive food advertising messages and engage with food is different. As will be recognised, compared to Sweden, the UK is experiencing higher levels of childhood obesity/overweight. Consequently, it was considered valuable to conduct research with adolescent consumers from both countries at a time when they are developing their independence as consumers. From the interpretivist perspective of the thesis (see chapter 4), their discourse surrounding food and food advertising in a social context was of particular interest, in order to ascertain similarities and differences with a view to inform initiatives for advertising healthy eating. Finally, it was deemed helpful that the researcher is a native speaker of Swedish and spent the first 19 years of her life in Sweden. Irvine *et al.* (2008) maintain that in order to ensure validity and to maximise the quality of research data, research participants should be able to use their first language.

2.7.1 Differing rates of obesity

The high rate of obesity in England served to focus the researcher's curiosity in the wider area of 'advertising to children' onto food advertising targeting young consumers. England ranks as one of the countries in Europe with the most severe levels of obesity (HM Government, 2011). Rates of overweight (including obesity) based on measured height and weight are approximately 24% for boys and 22% for girls in OECD (the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries (OECD, 2015). According to the *National Child Measurement Programme* in the UK (NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care, 2015a), 33.2% of 11-year-olds in England were overweight (19.1% obese) in the school year of 2014-15. The prevalence was higher among boys at 34.9% (20.7% obese) than for girls at 31.5%

(17.4% obese). For 11-15-year-olds in 2014, the incidence of overweight was higher at 35% (20% obese). Here the prevalence was higher amongst girls at 36% (18% obese) than boys at 35% (20% obese) (NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care, 2015b).

Sweden does not report national statistics on overweight and obesity for children. (The Public Health Agency of Sweden starts reporting for the age bracket 16-29 years [Public Health Agency of Sweden, 2016].) However, a report published by the Public Health Agency of Sweden (2005) proposing a method for introducing such a system, provides statistics for three municipalities in different parts of Sweden. The prevalence of overweight among girls aged 9-11.5 years was 23.8% (3.8% obese) and among boys 23.3% (5.94% obese). In a national diary study administered by the National Food Agency researching the eating habits of Swedish children aged 4, 8 and 11, between 17% and 23% of children were overweight (1-4% obese) (National Food Agency, 2003). These are the most recent statistics obtainable from an authoritative source. They indicate that childhood obesity is less of an issue in Sweden. However, it has been reported that obesity is becoming an increasing problem in Sweden (Radio Sweden, 2014; Svenska Dagbladet, 2015), although the researcher has been unable to obtain statistics demonstrating how this may apply to children.

In this context, it is significant to note that the first published report (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2006) attempting to map Swedish research dealing with marketing of unhealthy foods targeting children appeared only a decade ago. This is nearly 30 years later than the earliest study included in the literature review (Atkin and Heald [1977], who reported on television food advertising targeting children in the US). In 2006, the subject had already received extensive academic interest in the UK. The preparation of the aforementioned report involved contacting every Swedish university and polytechnic, enquiring about previous/ongoing studies and papers dealing with marketing of unhealthy foods targeting children. This ambitious initiative did not identify any work within the particular subject area.

2.7.2 Differences in the consumption context

In relation to the *consumption context*, both countries are members of the European Union (EU) (Sweden since 1995 and the UK since 1973, although at the time of writing a referendum has voted for the UK to leave). Table 2.2 provides some key data for each country. As can be seen, Sweden covers a significantly larger landmass than the UK, yet the population is almost seven times smaller with a lower population density. Sweden appears to have a healthier approach to work-life balance, with fewer hours worked per week.

In fact, Sweden attracted global media interest towards the end of 2015 when it was reported that a number of companies are trialling the concept of a six-hour working day, described as forming part of a “national obsession with work-life balance”. What is more, parents of a new-born child get 480 days of paid parental leave to split between them (Savage, 2015). The implication is that Swedish children may have the opportunity to spend more time at home with their parents and families having more time to make a healthy lifestyle a priority. In UNICEF UK’s (2013) latest study comparing well-being of children across the world’s richest 29 countries, the UK ranked 16th and Sweden 5th.

	The United Kingdom	Sweden
Total population	64,596,800 (mid-2014 estimate [ONS, 2015])	9,894,888 (31 May 2016 [Statistics Sweden, 2016a])
Area (km²)	248,531.52 (ONS, 2016a)	447,420 (Norden, no date)
Population density (per km²)	263 (ONS, 2016a)	24.2 (Statistics Sweden, 2016b)
Unemployment rate	5% (Feb-April 2016 [ONS, 2016b])	7.4% (2015 [Statistics Sweden, 2016c])
Actual hours worked per week	37.6 hours (full-time work, Feb-April 2016 [ONS, 2016c])	30.3 hours (full-time work, Jan 2016 [Statistics Sweden, 2016d])
Average salary (per capita, per year before tax)	£31,357, (West Lancashire [ONS, 2016d])	SEK 320,000 (£27,444), (Lerum [Statistics Sweden, 2016e])

Table 2.2: Key statistics for the United Kingdom and Sweden.

The UK’s position at the bottom of the child well-being league table six years earlier (UNICEF, 2007) prompted qualitative research to explore the story behind the statistics. The resulting qualitative study (Ipsos MORI/UNICEF, 2011) compared British and Swedish children’s well-being. It was found that the pinnacle of children’s well-being is time with a happy, stable family, friendships and meaningful activities, especially outdoors. Whereas it was found that UK parents struggled to provide their children with time and attention, in Sweden, family time appeared to be woven into the fabric of everyday life. In this context, it is appropriate to recognise that the conception of childhood differs between countries. Solberg (2015) comments that whereas British people generally would conceive the age of 10 as rather young for children to be left alone at home, this is not unusual in Norway. Solberg does recognise the difference in urbanisation – compared to central

parts of Britain, Norway can be seen as a collection of villages. In the researcher's experience, the Swedish situation is similar to that of Norway, with children expected to fend for themselves from a younger age. In fact, the qualitative study investigating UK and Swedish children's well-being (Ipsos MORI/UNICEF, 2011) did observe differences in attitudes to childhood, with implications for household roles and rules and ultimately the amount and type of time children spent with their families. Consequently, the study reports as a distinctive feature in Swedish households the notion that children should take a share in household tasks and a "sense of childhood as a preparation to become a responsible adult" (p. 32). In comparison, rules and roles in UK households were less clear, with less emphasis on sharing of chores and less family time, including fewer family meals during weekdays.

The fieldwork took place in Ormskirk, a market town with a population of 35,064 (figure reported for Ormskirk/Aughton and Western Parishes in the 2011 Census [West Lancashire Borough Council, 2012]) in West Lancashire, situated 21 km north of Liverpool. The fieldwork in Sweden was conducted in Lerum, a town with a population of 40,049 people (Statistics Sweden, 2015), located 21.3 km north of Gothenburg in the southwestern part of the country. Similar in size, both towns are situated close to major sea ports, both with a history in ship building. The average annual salary of West Lancashire is just over 14% higher than that of Lerum (see table 2.2). However, given that Swedish employees' working week is only three quarters that of British employees, the Swedes are still better off.

2.7.3 Eating habits among English and Swedish children

When it comes to young people's eating habits, the *National Diet and Nutrition Survey* (PHE, 2014a) found that 11-18-year-olds exceeded the recommended daily intake of non-milk extrinsic sugars (no more than 5% of food energy [PHE, 2015]) at 15.6% of food energy. The main source was soft drinks, followed by cakes, biscuits and breakfast cereals. That this is a particular problem among adolescents can be seen in table 2.3, with British children reported as having the highest consumption of sugary soft drinks in Europe (NHS, 2014).

Although the majority of 11-15-year-olds were aware of the '5-a-day' recommendation, a survey by the NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care (2008) found that only 22% of boys and 21% of girls could correctly identify what a portion was. The *National Diet and Nutrition Survey* (Public Health England, 2014a) found that only 10% of boys and 7% of girls aged 11-18 met the '5-a-day' recommendation (mean consumption for boys

3.0 and for girls 2.7 portions per day). The NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care (2008) found that the majority of children aged 11-15 agreed with the statement that healthy foods are enjoyable (girls 72% and boys 64%). Further, 38% of boys and 34% of girls agreed with the statement that the tastiest foods are the ones that are bad for you.

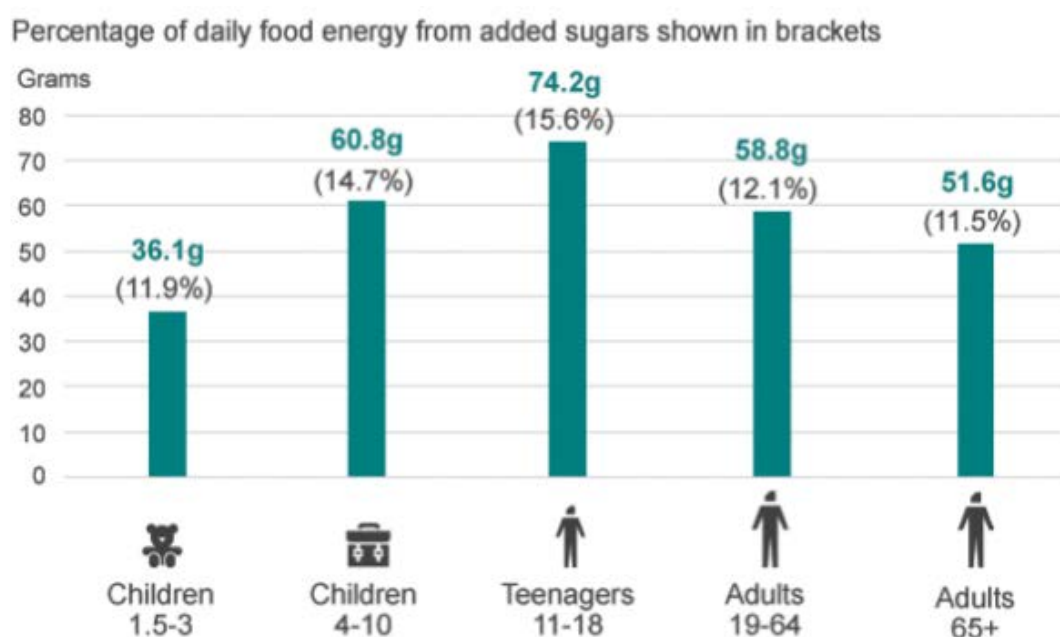


Table 2.3: Daily added sugar intake by age groups (National Diet and Nutrition Survey, rolling programme 2008-2012, Public Health England [2014a]).

A survey similar to the *National Diet and Nutrition Survey* is due to take place with Swedish adolescents in 2016-17. A national food survey was carried out in 2003 with children aged 4, 8 and 11. The survey found that generally Swedish children consumed too much sugar, the major sources being soft drinks, sweets, flavoured dairy products, biscuits, buns and cakes. The intake of fruit and vegetables was found to be about half the recommended amount for children in the age range. Overall, children's nutrient intake was found to be similar to that of adults and the most desired changes in food habits were a lower intake of sugar and an increase in the consumption of fruit and vegetables (National Food Agency, 2003). Swedish children are entitled to a free school lunch and that lunch must fulfil specific nutrition criteria, both aspects of which are enshrined in Swedish law (National Food Agency, 2013). In a Swedish school canteen, a dessert would be unthinkable, whereas puddings seem to be part of the British school-meal fabric. Great importance is placed upon school meals in England too. In

2013, the Department for Education published the *School Food Plan*, outlining strategies for improving the quality and take up of school meals (currently low at 43%, possibly partly explained by the presence of a charge, unless a child is entitled to free school meals). The *Plan* is about encouraging children to eat proper food to help boost their academic performance and the health of the nation (Department for Education, 2013).

2.7.4 Swedish myths?

Throughout her time in England, people with various levels of experience with Sweden have shared their impressions of Sweden with the researcher. Comments typically range from observations about high fish consumption, impressions that many people commute to work by bike and that offices tend to be empty by 5pm. During a recent visit to Stockholm, the researcher did witness the evening rush of commuter bikes, the density of which made it resemble a bike race (see image 2.3.).

In 2014, Radio Sweden (2014) investigated some stereotypes about Sweden, including whether Swedes are really as healthy as they see themselves and many visitors believe. The programme featured the research of Erik Hemmingson, a clinical research fellow at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. Hemmingson argues that hard work and an active lifestyle are ingrained in the Swedish culture, likely to be products of a cold climate and historically harsh conditions. What is more, the Swedish system of non-profit, open for all sports clubs and federations led by volunteers instead of organisations has contributed to a generally more active lifestyle. Hemmingson comments that although on average it seems that Swedes are health conscious and exercise more frequently than many other nationalities, Sweden is not free of obesity problems.



Image 2.3: Evening rush of commuter bikes in Stockholm city (photograph: Sherrington, 2015).

2.8 Children as consumers

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* defines a child as “every human being below the age of eighteen years” (UNICEF, 1989, article 1). The Swedish Marketing Act regards someone below the age of 16 as a child (Sveriges Riksdag, 2008), which is also the age definition used by the Office of Communications (Ofcom; the independent communications regulator that sets the standards for UK television advertising) in the UK (Ofcom, 2011).

Children are seen as a lucrative market segment from a young age. This section recognises children’s standing as consumers and gives some indication of their spending power.

2.8.1 Consumer kids

McNeal (1992, p. 89) refers to children as three markets. Consequently, children are seen as an attractive *future market* to be cultivated early. What is more, they are targeted as a *current market* of consumers with their own spending power, but also as an *influence market* in their ability to influence family spending (also see Kümpel Nørgaard, 2007; Boyland and Halford, 2013). Todd (2010) points to marketers’ recognition that children may exert substantial “pester power” (p. 229) on adults’ purchase decisions. Marshall (2010) comments on the ubiquity of the marketplace in children’s everyday life, pointing to how supermarkets with dedicated children’s food ranges provide an important environment in which to target these young consumers. Mayo and Nairn (2009) maintain that children’s experiences are shaped by commercial media culture, which they have grown up with and encourages them to be consumers and take pleasure in performing this role. Referring to them as *consumer kids*, Mayo and Nairn argue that marketing is “the very air that they breathe” (p. 26). Using fairly dramatic discourse, Linn (2004, p. 1) adopts the term *consuming kids* to describe “the consumer group formerly known as children”, claiming that today’s children grow up in a “marketing maelstrom”.

Mayo and Nairn (2009) argue that we are experiencing a *convergence of adulthood and childhood*, a situation whereby children exercise strong influence over parents’ purchase decisions. Hence, marketing to children may represent a strategy for selling products to parents. In fact, Mayo and Nairn suggest that adults stick with many of the same values as adolescents in an attempt to prolong childhood, producing a situation of “adults staying younger older, kids getting older younger” (p. 16). Postman (1994) observed towards the end of the 20th century that the idea of childhood was disappearing in US society, pointing to broadcast commercial television as a

“paradigm of an emerging social structure that must “disappear” childhood” (p. 75). He describes television as an “open-admission technology” (p. 80) without physical, economic, cognitive or imaginative barriers, exposing children to a range of material from serious news items to advertising. Accordingly, television eliminates the exclusivity of worldly knowledge, with the effect of eliminating the principal differences between childhood and adulthood. What is more, Postman points to a concurrent disappearance of adulthood with a merging of the values and styles of the child and those of the adult in areas such as food, clothing, games, entertainment and language. This would appear to be a continuing trend, given the argument regarding the convergence of adulthood and childhood proposed by Mayo and Nairn (2009) more than a decade later.

2.8.2 Adolescents as discretionary risk-takers with money to spend

The WHO (2016) states that children of all ages are highly susceptible to marketing of unhealthy foods and sugar-sweetened drinks and peer pressure. Understanding how food marketing may influence adolescents is important given that they tend to have their own disposable income (pocket-money/part-time job) and make independent purchase decisions. For many, physical activity declines at the time of adolescence (Utter *et al.*, 2006; Powell *et al.*, 2007; Scully *et al.*, 2012; Harris *et al.*, 2014; WHO, 2016). Swedish adolescents have substantial spending power. In 2014, 12-14-year-olds received on average SEK 348 (£29.85) as monthly pocket money, rising to SEK 570 (£48.89) when money earned for completing household chores was factored in (Swedbank, 2014). Nearly three quarters of children receiving this type of income save some of it. The most common spending target is sweets (around 50% of children buy sweets). After saving some money and buying sweets, girls most often spend money on clothes and makeup, café visits/fast food and ice-cream/fruit, whereas boys spend money on television/computer games (Institute for Private Economy/Swedbank, 2012).

The *Annual Halifax Pocket Money Survey* (2015) shows that British 8-15-year-olds on average receive £6.20 per week, with 70% saving some of this amount (Lloyds Banking Group, 2015). Given that 78% of British children receive pocket money of an average of £6.20 every week (Lloyds Banking Group, 2015) and there were 2,096,590 children aged 12 to 14 in 2015 (ONS, 2016f), this would mean that this narrow age range has a combined yearly spending power of just over £527 million. This makes young adolescents a very attractive market for brand owners! Given that there were 319,116 12-14-year-olds in Sweden in 2015 (Statistics Sweden, 2016d), 74% of whom get an average monthly allowance of SEK 459 (Swedbank, 2014),

their combined spending power is at least SEK 986 million per year³ (approximately £84.6 million).

Tinson and Nancarrow (2010, p. 139) recognise that consumption has taken on increased importance in many societies, fulfilling both functional and symbolic needs. Compared to earlier generations, children are assumed to have more “shopping savvy”; being more knowledgeable and sophisticated regarding shopping. Todd (2010) points to socialisation and consumer rights perspectives that maintain that children need to learn to consume and therefore have the right to information and choices as consumers. However, Kline (2010) recognises that the globesity pandemic has served to reignite a long-standing ideological debate regarding children’s ambiguous standing as consumers in a media-saturated marketplace. Kline highlights that there is limited evidence that teenage consumers are capable of performing complex price-benefits-risk calculations associated with exercising rational choice, especially concerning products associated with long-term health risk, such as fast food. He concludes that children are neither victims of marketing nor possess savvy; they are “consumers-in-training” (p. 252).

Kline (2011) argues that the lifestyle risks associated with children’s exposure to advertising are for the most part related to “discretionary snacking choices” (p. 85) sanctioned by their consumer empowerment in the ‘obesogenic’ family. In Kline’s view, children’s “discretionary power” (p. 150) is best expressed in what they purchase with their own money. As children approach adolescence this consumer power increases, accompanied by greater resources, scope and opportunities to take lifestyle risks. However, these young consumers are still very much dependent upon their parents’ restrictions, modelling and explanation in order to enable them to make healthy choices of their own. Kline describes consumer socialisation during adolescence as involving constant negotiation lodged in a power dynamic, the intention of which is to produce autonomous, self-regulating individuals. He claims that despite their knowledge that a healthy diet and regular exercise represent lifestyle decisions that reduce the risk of overweight, most adolescents are “discretionary risk-takers” (p. 209).

2.8.3 The decision to conduct research with young adolescents

The decision to conduct research with 12-14-year-olds was informed by the above discussion. Accordingly, this age group is at a stage in their consumer socialisation when they start to have freedom to make independent consumer decisions. What is more, habits formed during this stage are

³ This figure refers to pocket money only; money earned for completing household chores is not factored in.

thought to remain into adulthood, making this an important life-stage for instilling healthy lifestyle choices. Further, until comparatively recently, adolescents have received limited research attention within the context of food advertising (Chan *et al.*, 2011a; Scully *et al.*, 2012), meaning that many of the thesis findings contribute new knowledge. There were practical reasons for selecting the age of 12. Swedish children start secondary school at this age (rather than 11, which is generally the case in England) and this is also the age at which television advertising broadcast from within Sweden may target children directly. It was considered appropriate for both sets of participants to be at high-school, with the concomitant freedom enjoyed at this stage compared to primary school. The literature review has not identified any studies addressing Swedish 12-year-old consumers' views of television advertising targeting young adolescents. Given the frequent mention of Sweden's advertising ban, this lack of investigation is surprising. Consequently, the thesis presents new insight into how Swedish children's "protected status" may have influenced their consumer socialisation at the age of 12.

2.9 The medium of television

Television still enjoys a unique position in that it offers a meeting-place for families and television programmes provide talking points for friends at school. Unlike new media that require engagement and activity from the user, television viewing permits the viewer to relax (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2006). This section accounts for the decision to focus on television advertising, its standing as an advertising medium and adolescents' relationship to television viewing.

2.9.1 The decision to focus on television advertising

Initial thinking around the thesis topic involved a comparative study of television food advertising versus digital food advertising. However, it was decided to limit the study to television advertising. This decision followed from the need to provide focus to the study, which already encompassed the complex facets of cross-national research and research with children, whereas retaining the online aspect would have made the scope of the thesis too broad. It is important to note, however, that some of the thesis findings are of relevance also for advertising in new media. The decision to focus on television advertising was also informed by the first stage of the fieldwork, which was exploratory in character. This phase involved discussions about food advertising in print, television and new media (mobile and internet). During this phase, television advertising was more salient in the discussions

and during a card sorting activity, all groups rated television advertising as more influential on food choice than new media (see tables 6.1 and 6.2). What is more, the UK Childhood Obesity Strategy published in August 2016 (HM Government, 2016) contains no references to food advertising, despite calls for measures addressing loopholes in current television advertising codes, meaning that children may still be exposed to HFSS advertising on television (see 2.4.4).

2.9.2 Television advertising expenditure

Television advertising remains a central platform for the building and promotion of brands (Boyland *et al.*, 2012). Dixon *et al.* (2007) maintain that television food advertising represents one factor in the obesogenic environment and consequently warrants public health intervention. The most recent food advertising expenditure figures obtained for Sweden are those cited in a study by the Nordic Council of Ministers (2006). The study reports that SEK 3 billion (£257 million) is spent on food advertising in Sweden every year, SEK 995 million (£85.3 million) of which is for energy-dense foods and SEK 350 million (£30 million) for fast food chains. SEK 238 million (£20.4 million) is spent on advertising energy-dense and nutrient-poor foods on television between seven and eight o'clock in the morning and five and eight o'clock at night, times when children are most likely to watch. In comparison, the advertising expenditure for fruit and vegetables amounts to SEK 35 million (£3 million) and the Swedish National Food Agency has a yearly advertising budget of SEK 15-20 million (£1.29-1.72 million) for dietary health communication. Figures cited by Public Health England (PHE, 2015) indicate that the UK food industry spent an estimated £780 million on the advertising and marketing of food and drink in 2014, £256 million of which was for the promotion of unhealthy options. Total television advertising spend in the UK was £4.6 billion in 2013, £142 million of which was spent on children's advertising. Consequently, television advertising expenditure is substantial and food receives extensive advertising support.

Given the increasing importance of digital and mobile media, the future standing of television advertising has been questioned. However, media spend figures for television advertising demonstrate that expenditure remains significant. In Sweden in 2014, EUR 697.1 million was spent on television advertising, which represented a 16.5% increase since 2010. In the UK in 2015, EUR 6,221.7 million was spent on television advertising, an increase of 24.3% compared to 2010 with expenditure forecast to increase by another 4.6% during 2016 (WARC, 2016). At the time of writing, the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) (2016; Gwynn, 2016c) in the UK has launched a full public consultation on introducing new rules relating to the advertising of

food and soft drinks products to children in non-broadcast media, including online. These proposals could see the advertising of HFSS food and drink targeting children banned online. If this were to happen, new media would no longer offer a less regulated alternative to television media with which to reach children, with the likely outcome that television will retain its current relevance as a main advertising medium.

2.9.3 The role played by television viewing for adolescent consumers

A recent study by the Swedish Media Council (2015) recognises that media use is an integrated part of daily life; previously it was a distinct leisure-time activity. The study recognises the difficulty in defining the very concept of media that comes with the blurring of boundaries between different types, for instance with the availability of television services on mobile media. In the study, 88% of Swedish 13-16-year-olds (83% of boys and 93% of girls) indicated that they watch television. The programme *Idol* represents one of the five most popular programmes for both genders and is broadcast by Swedish commercial channel tv4. In an ethnographic study on Swedish children and adolescents' relationship to *Idol*, Graffman and Fredriksson (2015) describe the programme as fulfilling the role of a "campfire" (p. 32) around which families gather on a Friday evening. Graffman and Fredriksson's ethnography recognises that media use may be concurrent and observed how family members settled down by the television with other devices, such as tablets.

A children's diary study carried out by Ofcom (2014) demonstrated that British 11-15-year-olds squeeze 9 hours 33 minutes of media activity each day into 7 hours 3 minutes. The same study indicated whilst 11-15-year-olds display extensive use of smartphones and games consoles, 75% still watch live television during the week (26% watch television on demand and 35% watch recorded television). It is important to note that for British 10-15-year-olds, the majority of this viewing is in adult airtime⁴. Audience research conducted by BARB (Broadcasters' Audience Research Board) (2011) showed that the age group on average spend 79% of their viewing in adult airtime, 61% of which is in commercial adult airtime.

⁴ BARB (2011) defines *adult airtime* as all the main terrestrial channels, excluding the slots when children's programmes are shown, combined with all digital channels except dedicated children's channels.

2.10 Summary

The overall context of the study has been set out, recognising that we are inhabiting an obesogenic environment where overweight/obesity results from easy access to energy-dense and nutrient-poor foods accompanied by insufficient encouragement for physical exercise. Various national and international measures dealing with childhood obesity have been reviewed. The selection of study countries, England and Sweden, has been accounted for, including some key differences in the communication and consumption contexts of the two countries. What is more, the chapter has investigated children as consumers, recognising that they represent an important target market in terms of their own disposable income, their influence over family spending and their potential as a future adult market. Adolescent consumers in England and Sweden were found to possess substantial spending power. Finally, the chapter has accounted for the reasons why television advertising has been focused upon. Its standing as an advertising medium has been clarified and adolescents' television viewing habits have been addressed.

The next chapter reviews the literature associated with social marketing, consumer socialisation and television food advertising.

Chapter 3: Literature review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is in three parts (see figure 3.1). The first part explores fundamental principles of social marketing. Key theories associated with attitude and behaviour change, as well as principles of communications and persuasion within a social marketing context are then reviewed. The second part reviews the literature on consumer socialisation and advertising literacy and then the literature associated with adolescents and healthy eating. The third part reviews key aspects of the literature associated with television food advertising targeting children, with a particular interest in adolescents.

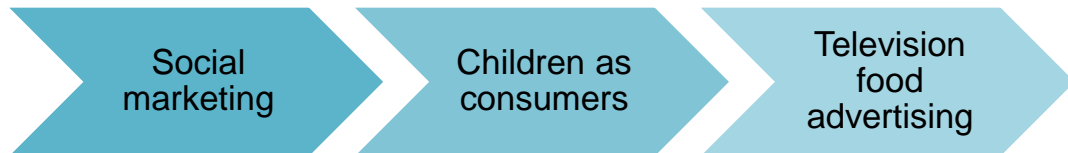


Figure 3.1: Literature review themes.

3.2 What is social marketing?

Social marketing as a discipline was established more than 40 years ago. Proposing *broadening of the concept of marketing*, Kotler and Levy (1969) argued that marketing is a “pervasive social activity”, presenting the opportunity to apply marketing thinking to a range of social activities carried out by “non-business organisations” (p. 10). Examining the applicability of core marketing concepts to the domain of social change, Kotler and Zaltman (1971) have been credited with introducing social marketing by its proper name. Their analysis of the “social marketing approach” (p. 7) has served to influence current thinking, with many of their arguments echoed by recent texts. Kotler and Zaltman acknowledge the capacity of social marketing to act as a “bridging mechanism” (p. 5) between simple possession of knowledge and its socially useful implementation. They also recognise some of the many complexities of the discipline, such as the challenges associated with defining the social marketing ‘product’.

Andreasen (2003, p. 293) terms the 1990s as a “breakthrough in concept and practice”, when social marketing started to focus on *behaviour change*.

In the 21st century, the discipline has been widely adopted as an “innovative approach to social change”. Andreasen (1994, p. 110) offers this definition of social marketing:

“Social marketing is the adaptation of commercial marketing technologies to programs designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are part.”

Andreasen (2003) positions behaviour as the “bottom line” of social marketing (p. 296), where its effectiveness is measured through behavioural influence.

Lefebvre (2013) describes the aim of social marketing as achieving social impact through the application of marketing concepts/strategies to social issues. As such, it offers a systematic approach to addressing and resolving what Lefebvre describes as “the wicked problems our world faces” (p. 5). Such problems are complex in their nature and definition, with relevant stakeholders having different ideas of their origins and appropriate solutions. By this description, childhood obesity represents a “wicked problem”. Lefebvre proposes that changing people’s behaviour may offer a part-solution. The fact that “wicked problems” have a social context necessitates the involvement of a range of relevant stakeholders in policy making and implementation. Solutions need to be comprehensive and innovative, calling upon the use of social marketing principles. Donovan and Henley (2010) explain that social marketing has a major contribution to make in understanding and facilitating social change and, crucially, facilitating its diffusion and adoption.

Donovan and Henley (2010, p. 20) state that social marketing can be seen as “a bag of tools or technologies adapted mainly from commercial marketing and applied to issues for the social good”, but maintain that social marketing goes further than the simple application of marketing to social issues. In their view, the key point of difference is that the social marketer’s goals concern the well-being of the *community*, whereas within commercial marketing goals relate to the well-being of the marketer (e.g. sales and profits).

As will be seen, commercial marketing principles are for the most part applicable within a social marketing context. There are, however, differences between the two disciplines. Some of these are identified in table 3.1. Many of the differences highlight some special challenges facing social marketing. In fact, Andreasen (2012) argues that despite the long history of social marketing, managerial and pedagogical issues arising in a non-commercial setting tend to be regarded as “unique cases in an intellectual environment dominated by commercial issues and applications” (p. 36). Recognising that

both commercial and social marketing aim to influence behaviours and that the social marketer faces more complex challenges in doing so, Andreasen advances the proposition of considering social marketing as the dominant form and commercial marketing as a specialised, simplified case.

Social marketing 'product' often information, designed to change behaviour.

- Product definition difficult. Even with tangible product, the task is to sell an 'idea'.

Instant gratification not available.

- Unlike for commercial product, promised benefit tends to be delayed.

Attempts to replace undesirable behaviours.

- Replacement behaviours tend to be more costly in time/effort and, in the short-term, less pleasurable.

Targets complex behaviours.

- Behaviour personally/socially more complex, compared to purchase behaviour for commercial product.

Proposed behaviours may be inconsistent with social pressures.

- Consuming unhealthy foods may be normative in some contexts.

Often targets hard-to-reach at-risk groups, reluctant to change.

- Targets for commercial marketing are often already positive towards the product/its benefits.

Political considerations far more frequent.

- Large corporations/industry bodies influence governments eager to stay in power.

Operates in social systems that cause/exacerbate the targeted problem.

- Commercial marketing operates in systems that facilitate marketing processes.

Genuine concern for customers' needs, not just their money.

- A social marketing transaction seeks to enhance the client's self-esteem, empowerment and well-being.

Table 3.1: Unique characteristics of social marketing (Donovan and Henley, 2010).

3.3 Principles of social marketing

The following sections will explore five principles of social marketing (see figure 3.2).

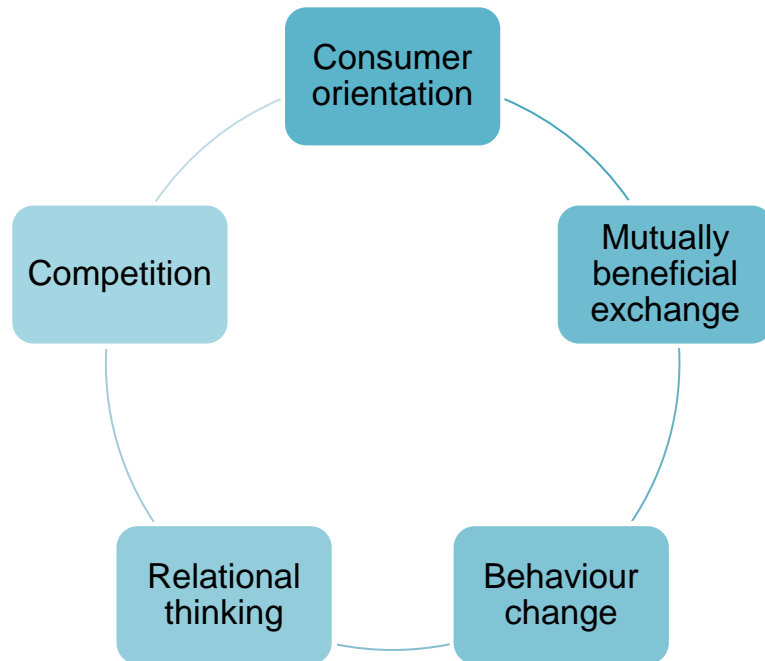


Figure 3.2: Principles of social marketing.

3.3.1 Consumer orientation – the marketing concept

Hastings and Domegan (2014) maintain that *consumer (or client) orientation* – essentially, listening to the consumer in order to understand their perspective – represents the most important proposition introduced by marketing and which ultimately makes it easier to influence consumers' behaviour. This orientation is referred to as the *marketing concept*. Social marketers share this thinking and maintain that successfully influencing social and health behaviour is contingent upon an understanding of those, whose behaviour needs to change. For instance, people may possess healthy eating knowledge, but stick with their current diet due to the treats that it provides – a benefit they see as incompatible with a healthy diet. The social marketer's challenge is then to devise a way of enabling people to receive the same benefit more healthily.

Donovan and Henley (2010) pose the question of whether social marketing can really be based on customers' needs. They propose as a basic distinction between social and commercial marketing the fact that social marketing campaigns are frequently based not on needs experienced by

consumers, but on needs identified by experts. Donovan and Henley, however, proceed to recognise that a consumer orientation within social marketing dictates that the design, delivery and promotion of the message, as well as relevant products and services, must be conducted in accordance with consumer needs.

3.2.2 *Mutually beneficial exchange*

Exchange theory prescribes that when presented with behavioural options, people will proceed by ascribing value to each and then select the alternative that offers the greatest benefit (Hastings and Domegan, 2014). Intuitively applicable within commercial marketing – utilitarian exchange of a product for money – its application within the social marketing domain has met with some resistance. For instance, whilst exchange theory stipulates that *each party should be free to accept or reject the offer*, people in disadvantaged communities may lack the money and/or access to consume fresh fruit and vegetables. Within social marketing, the exchange may be described as *symbolic* or *intangible*, with the transfer of what might be physical, psychological or social benefits. Hence, the social marketer faces the challenge of promoting benefits that the consumer may never see, for instance not developing type 2 diabetes by adopting a healthier diet (Hastings and Saren, 2003). The intrinsic value of the social marketing product notwithstanding, Donovan and Henley (2010) argue that the “business of social change” faces the same challenges as commercial marketers in getting people to “buy” and act upon their message (p. 3).

Hastings and Domegan (2014) explain that social marketing is not about money, but human behaviour and that it is this *behaviour* that can be viewed in terms of exchange. In order to increase people’s readiness to change, it is the task of social marketers to offer something beneficial in return. Donovan and Henley (2010) offer the example of immunisation, where the person exchanges time and effort for a healthy life through disease prevention. The health organisation exchanges resources for lower morbidity and lower health costs. Accordingly, Donovan and Henley propose that some form of exchange usually takes place within a social marketing context, although it may be primarily *intra-individual* and somewhat complex to define. Their pragmatic reading of the exchange concept as it applies to social marketers dictates that social marketers should: (1) offer something of value to their target audience, (2) recognise that consumers must hand over resources (e.g. time, money, lifestyle change, psychological effort) in exchange for the promised benefits and (3) acknowledge that all parties supporting a campaign need something of value to recompense their efforts. In fulfilling these requirements, the social marketer should maximise the perceived

benefits and minimise the perceived costs associated with the proposed behaviour change. Hastings and Haywood (1991) recognise that the communications function within social marketing also represents a form of exchange, providing the understanding and empathy required for a mutually beneficial exchange to take place.

Hastings and Domegan (2014) pose the question of whether the idea of *compromise*, a concept central to mutually beneficial exchange, can also exist within social marketing. The authors argue that flexibility to be able to adjust the offering also applies within social marketing, as the core concepts of *consumer orientation* and *exchange* would otherwise lose their meaning. Importantly, a flexible offering may make the consumer more open to change because of the compromise. This thinking reinforces the idea that exchanges must be mutually beneficial and sees social marketing as a process of seeking win-wins.

Social marketing can succeed (i.e. realise behaviour change) by adopting a *collective orientation*, a form of *systems thinking* that places social marketing in the wider social economy. Success follows not from addressing the behaviour of the individual, but that of all relevant actors, who may influence the decision-making of the individual (Hastings and Domegan, 2014). Donovan and Henley (2010) argue that social marketing needs to go further still, by promoting changes in social structures that support individuals in changing their lifestyle. This involves targeting those, who have the power to make institutional policy and legislative change.

3.3.3 Behaviour change

Andreasen's (1994) definition of social marketing previously quoted states that behaviour change is *voluntary*; individuals may simply decide not to adapt their behaviour. Hastings and Domegan (2014) likewise recognise that consumers' co-operation with social marketers' behaviour change schemes is on a voluntary basis. Donovan and Henley (2010) argue that the provision of information on its own is often insufficient in bringing about behaviour change. Rather, information needs to be combined with *persuasion*, where the aim is to directly influence the target audience to adopt the recommendations provided by the message source. Accordingly, Donovan and Henley explain that social marketing seeks to *inform* and *persuade*, and, where required, *legislate* in order to fulfil its goals.

The notion that advertising does not have the power to bring about behaviour change single-handedly, but has to be blended with the other elements of the marketing mix, is widely accepted in the health sector (Hastings and Haywood, 1991). What is more, to motivate behaviour change, campaigns

should address both the *internal* (personal) and *external* (environmental) forces that guide young consumers' behaviour (Weintraub Austin, 1995; Hastings and Domegan, 2014).

Andreasen (2003) argues that there is a "starting change bias" (p. 300) in the field of social marketing, with the spotlight turned upon the challenges associated with getting someone to do something. Andreasen draws attention to the fact that it is *repeat behaviour* – maintenance of behaviour change – that represents true success, which leads to the questions of how to maintain change and what models provide appropriate encouragement of such behaviour.

3.3.4 Relational thinking

The very fact that social marketing deals with behaviour change lends profound importance to relationship marketing thinking. Social marketing addresses behaviour that may require long-term effort to change; the adoption of a healthy diet typically involves lifestyle changes, as opposed to an isolated behaviour (Hastings and Saren, 2003; Hastings and Domegan, 2014). The task of social marketing goes beyond helping the achievement of desirable social change, to assisting in its maintenance (Donovan and Henley, 2010). What is more, relational thinking takes on prominence in that social marketers need to address the social context, to ensure that it accommodates individual healthy behaviour (Hastings and Saren, 2003). *Social cognitive theory* (see 3.4.1) attempts to reconcile the conflicts between the individual and collective views, seeing behaviour as reciprocally determined by internal personal factors and the environment in which the person lives (Bandura, 1986).

3.3.5 Competition

Hastings and Domegan (2014) propose that social marketing faces two categories of competition. The first type is *indirect/passive competition* and refers to current behaviours and social systems. This orientation recognises that consumers have a choice and often continue with their current behaviour. Some barriers to change are internal, in the form of beliefs, feelings, attitudes or intentions. Family, friends and the immediate environment may present additional barriers to change. The social marketer needs to analyse this competition to ascertain what benefits it is perceived to deliver, in order to determine how an alternative behaviour can be positioned as more attractive to bring about a mutually beneficial exchange.

The other facet of competition is *direct/active competition*, delivered by organisations working in the opposite direction from social marketing. Hence, extensive integrated marketing communications initiatives on the part of fast food brands successfully promote a convenience-based, nutritionally-poor diet to young consumers, as will be explored further in sections 3.8-3.10. Commercial marketing activity represents a crucial aspect of the environment, constituting an important determinant of behaviour and a key competitor for social marketing.

The discussion to this point has dealt with three of Hastings and Domegan's (2014) four social marketing orientations – the *client, collective and competitive orientations* (see figure 1.1). As way of summary of the material covered so far, Hastings and Domegan recognise that these marketing orientations build upon the concept of *mutually beneficial exchange* and take on the role of “strategic drivers” (p. 48) when combined with *relational thinking* and the need to engage with *multiple stakeholders*. It follows that social marketing may best be seen as a *process* for engaging people in social change, where people feel empowered and live in social structures that enable change. The attention will now turn to theoretical modelling of behaviour change.

3.4 Attitude and behaviour change

Donovan and Henley (2010) explain that models of attitude and behaviour change are based on the assumption that an individual's *beliefs* about an issue will determine the individual's *attitude* and *intentions*, which ultimately will predict how the individual *behaves* towards the issue. Understanding such models assists the setting of communications objectives and generating message strategies for achieving attitude and behaviour change. One such model is that of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), which will be explored next.

3.4.1 Social cognitive theory

Social cognitive theory (SCT) builds upon *social learning theory* (Bandura, 1977), which posits that learning occurs via a process of reinforcement. Accordingly, behaviours that are rewarded tend to be repeated; those that are punished tend not to be. Many learned behaviours depend on social reinforcement and new behaviours may be learned not simply by receiving reinforcements, but by *observing* reinforcements delivered to others. This represents the basis of *modelling* – adopting behaviours through imitation. This means that not only does the behaviour in itself matter, but also the

environment in which it happens. Social learning theory provides the primary rationale for the modelling of desirable health behaviours in television advertising (Donovan and Henley, 2010).

Describing health promotion by social cognitive means, Bandura (2004) explains that SCT specifies a core set of determinants (see figure 3.3 for an overview):

Knowledge of health risks and benefits of alternative behaviours represents a precondition for change, but does not in itself inevitably lead to behaviour change. Health-promoting behaviour requires a set of complex cognitive, social, behavioural and self-regulatory *skills* (Maibach and Cotton, 1995). What is more, beliefs of personal *efficacy* – a core belief that one can exercise control over one's health habits – are important in facilitating the adoption and maintenance of new lifestyle habits, described by Bandura (2004) as the “foundation of human motivation and action” (p. 144), a concept with cross-cultural applicability (Bandura, 2002), without which people “have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties” (Bandura, 2001, p. 10). As a general concept, it also applies to children. Bandura *et al.*'s (2001) experiment with Italian adolescents aged 11-15 found *perceived efficacy*, rather than actual academic achievement, to be the key determinant of perceived occupational self-efficacy and preferred choice of profession. Donovan and Henley (2010) recognise self-efficacy as Bandura's major contribution to social cognitive models.

Health behaviour is also affected by the *expected outcomes* from the behaviour. Here, *physical outcomes* relate to increasing or decreasing health or the pleasures of living. *Social outcomes* relate to social approval/disapproval by others. *Self-evaluative outcomes* relate to one's health behaviour/status, incurring self-approval or self-disapproval. Personal *goals* represent a major source of motivation for behaviour change/maintenance. Bandura (2004) recognises that personal change would be easy if there were no obstacles to navigate. Some *impediments* are personal ones (e.g. stress, fatigue, competing priorities) that interfere with healthful behaviour.

Another set of impediments reside in the social and economic structures of health systems. The environment can be sub-divided into two domains. The '*immediate environment*' represents the relatively direct influence of family, friends and the local community. The '*wider social context*' is structures and systems delivering more indirect influence in terms of social mores, economic conditions and cultural norms. Thus, there is a two-way relationship between personal and environmental factors. Environments shape people and their behaviours; people shape their environments through their behaviour and expectations (Hastings and Domegan, 2014, p. 61).

Maibach and Cotton (1995) claim that SCT offers a “balanced and optimistic view of the human condition” (p. 44) in that individual behaviour change can be facilitated by modifying people’s personal factors and amending environmental factors to facilitate healthy living.

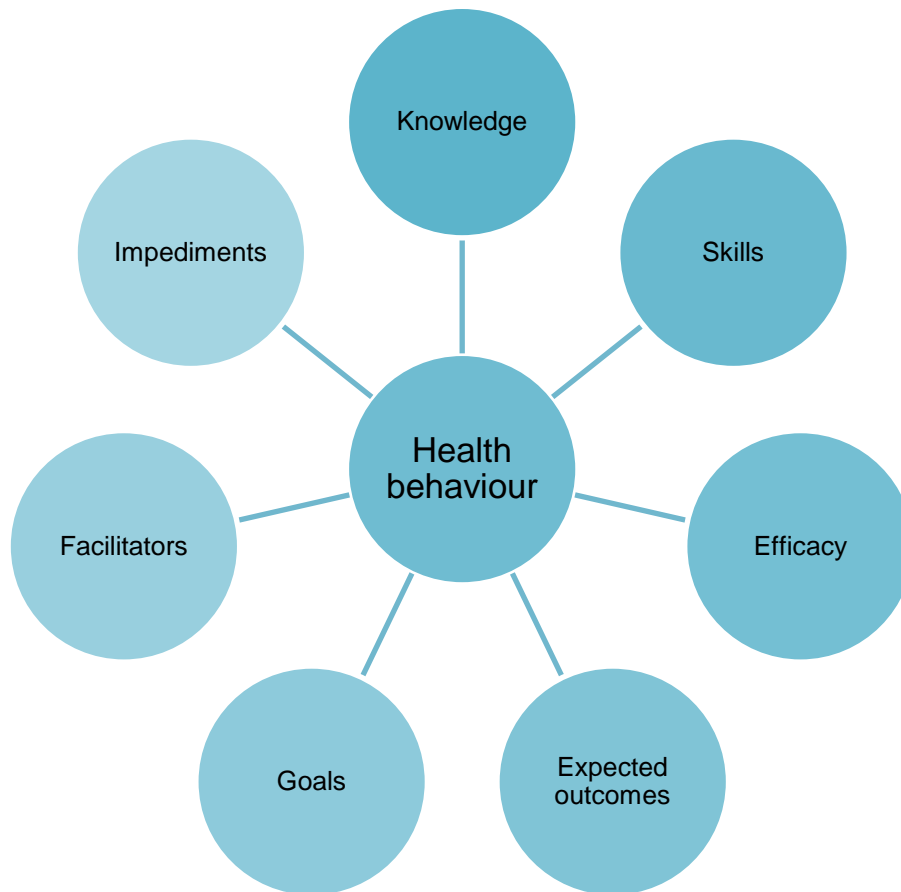


Figure 3.3: Determinants of health behaviour (Bandura, 2004).

Bandura (2004; 2009) describes *self-efficacy* as the foundation of human agency, affecting health behaviour directly and by its influence upon the other determinants. Figure 3.4 depicts the structural paths of influence, where *perceived self-efficacy* affects health behaviour directly and through its impact upon *goals*, *outcome expectations* and *socio-structural facilitators* and *impediments* to health-promoting behaviour. Bandura (2009) explains that SCT is founded in an *agentive perspective*, where people are “self-developing, proactive, self-regulating and self-reflecting” (p. 94). Personal agency operates within a broad network of socio-structural influences, where people are the producers of social systems, not simply products of them. Bandura (2004, p. 159) contends that “social cognitive theory extends the conception of human agency to collective agency”. As such, the quality of health of a nation goes further than simply changing individuals’ behaviour; it

calls for *collective efficacy* to change the practices of social systems that impair health.

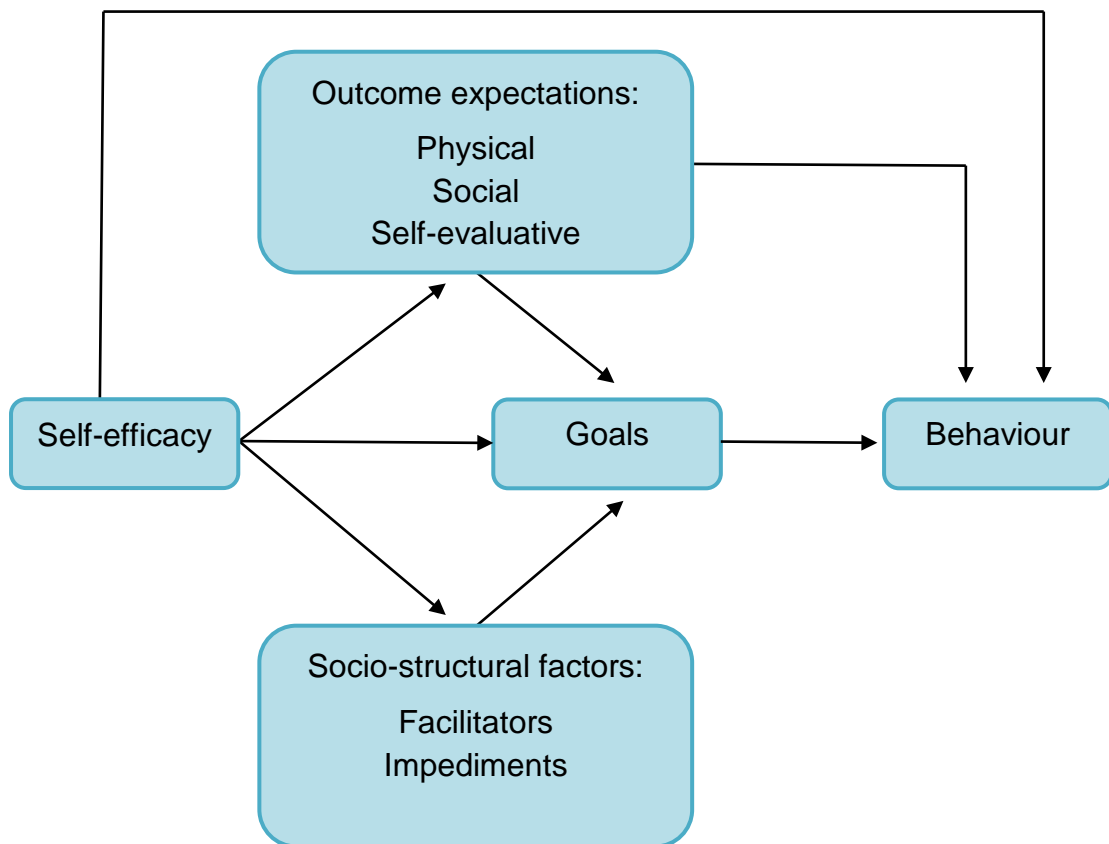


Figure 3.4: Bandura's social cognitive theory model (Bandura, 2004, p. 146).

Maibach and Cotton (1995) recognise that communications can contribute positively towards a range of these factors in order to encourage behaviour change. Hence, health communication campaigns can be instrumental in transferring appropriate levels of knowledge, complemented by skill-building messages through demonstration and explanation. Communications can also influence the self-efficacy perceived by the target audience and establish positive outcome expectations.

3.4.1.1 Health promotion via the social cognitive model

Bandura demonstrates the application of the social cognitive model in the promotion of health in a number of contexts. For instance, society-wide efforts to promote healthy living tend to rely on public health campaigns. In order to improve their effectiveness, Bandura (2004) argues that such

campaigns should empower people with the self-management skills and self-beliefs required in order to take charge of their well-being. Public health campaigns can be strengthened further, by introducing what Bandura (2004) terms “dual paths of influence” (p. 150). As illustrated in figure 3.5, in the *direct pathway* of influence, media promote changes by informing, modelling, motivating and guiding personal changes. Bandura (2009) recognises that an extensive amount of information about human values, styles of thinking and behaviour patterns is gained *vicariously* (learning by observing others) from modelling in the symbolic environment of the mass media. In the *socially mediated pathway*, the media link participants to social systems, which provide personalised guidance, incentives and support for change. Bandura (2004; 2009) argues that the provision of resources and environmental support is crucial in order to realise change.

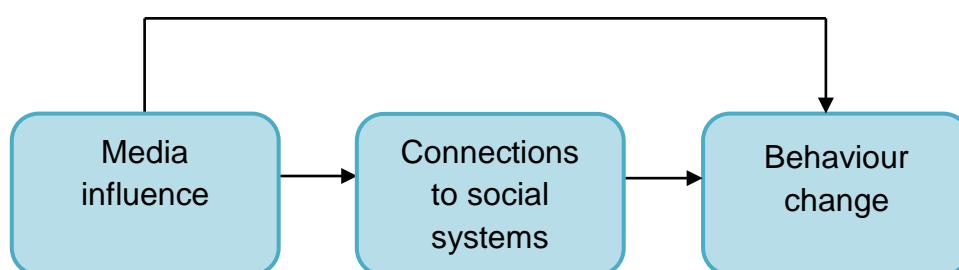


Figure 3.5: Dual paths of influence (Bandura, 2004, p. 150).

SCT has frequently been applied to develop obesity prevention interventions (Lubans *et al.*, 2012; Szczepanska *et al.*, 2012; Pedersen *et al.*, 2015) and appears to be cross-culturally applicable:

Ball *et al.*'s (2009) study confirms that SCT provides a useful framework for understanding socio-economic variations in Australian adolescents' diets. Cognitive factors, particularly self-efficacy and the perceived importance of healthy behaviour, were found to be important mediators of socio-economic variations in fruit consumption, whilst food availability in the home was found to be a more important mediator for consumption of energy-dense snacks and fast foods. The authors recognise the need for health promotion to focus on self-efficacy and the value attached to health-promoting behaviours. Lubans *et al.* (2012) tested the utility of SCT in explaining dietary behaviour among Australian adolescent girls in low-income communities. Consistent with SCT, self-efficacy was found to be one of the strongest correlates of dietary intake. The authors conclude that supporting adolescents to improve their self-efficacy for healthy eating represents a priority for health promotion.

Sharma *et al.* (2006) found self-efficacy to represent a significant predictor of the consumption of five or more servings of fruit and vegetables among US children. The authors maintain that social cognitive theory offers a practically useful framework for designing primary prevention interventions to reduce childhood obesity. Pedersen *et al.*'s study (2015) confirmed the impact of self-efficacy and outcome expectations on Danish adolescents' consumption of fruit and vegetables. The authors maintain that healthy eating interventions targeting adolescents should aim at strengthening their self-efficacy and emphasise positive outcomes. What is more, the observed influence of parents leads the authors to recommend that the family context should be included when conducting healthy eating interventions and that parents – as gatekeepers – should be made aware of their role model influence in the context of healthy eating. Szczepanska *et al.* (2012) found self-efficacy to be closely associated with fruit and vegetable intake among Polish adolescents and propose the bolstering of self-efficacy to be an effective tool in obesity prevention initiatives targeting adolescents.

3.5 Principles of communications and persuasion

As recognised so far, social marketing is fundamentally concerned with encouraging behaviour change. Behaviour change in most cases is contingent upon changes in beliefs, attitudes and intentions (Donovan and Henley, 2010). This section will introduce one of the most commonly used persuasion models – the *elaboration likelihood model* (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). It will then explore two of the most commonly applied appeals within social marketing – *fear appeals* and *incentive appeals* – and so address the fourth of Hastings and Domegan's (2014) social marketing orientations; that of *creative orientation* (see figure 1.1).

3.5.1 The elaboration likelihood model

Cognitive processing models attempt to describe how cognitive processing of messages explains persuasion. According to such models, effective advertising messages must consider not simply the initial attitude held by the target audience, but their *involvement* in the issue and their *motivation* to process information (Donovan and Henley, 2010). One of the main such models is the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) proposed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986):

Petty and Cacioppo (1986) propose that there are two routes to persuasion (attitude change). In the *central route*, persuasion occurs via extensive consideration (elaboration) of issue-relevant arguments in the message. This

route results in attitude change when an individual attends to information (arguments) intended to communicate about the advertised product. In the *peripheral route*, persuasion occurs via factors that are peripheral to the message argument and may involve visual cues, attractive actors or other source characteristics. Petty and Cacioppo propose that persuasion via the central route occurs when the receiver is *motivated* and has the *capacity* to process the message content. This is most likely to happen in situations of high involvement, where the issue has high *personal relevance* and high *potential impact* upon a person's life. Even those individuals, who do not attend to the message argument may be persuaded, because of the association between the product and the attractive peripheral cues. Attitudes that are changed with minimal elaboration are postulated to be weaker than those changed as a result of extensive elaboration.

Petty and Wegener (1999) subsequently provided an extensive clarification of the ELM, where they explain that elaboration likelihood should not be seen as two discreet points (high-low), but as a *continuum*. It follows that the *type* of thought given to object-relevant information can be the same under high- and low-elaboration conditions, but that the *amount* of cognitive activity varies (p. 46). Hence, there is a *quantitative* variation in the extent of elaboration. Petty and Wegener recognise that if the only differences involved in persuasion were quantitative in character, then it might be appropriate simply to speak in terms of one persuasion process that operated in varying degrees. Accordingly, they propose a *qualitative* variation in information processing. Hence, items of information available in the persuasion situation (e.g. message arguments, source characteristics, images) would be treated as an "argument" by those with high involvement and as a "cue" for those with low involvement (p. 48).

Whereas the ELM has received support when tested with adults (e.g. Petty and Cacioppo, 1979; 1984; Andrews and Shimp, 1990), it has not been fully tested with children. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) hypothesised that very young children are likely to lack both the motivation and ability to engage with issue-relevant arguments and even as they mature, their ability to scrutinise such arguments remains limited. As such, they may be more reliant on what significant others say and do, as well as cognitive rules developed from their own experience.

Only two studies examining the utility of the ELM in explaining children's processing of advertising have been identified. Te'eni-Hariri *et al.* (2007) tested the relevance of the ELM among three age groups (4-7, 8-11 and 12-15) in the context of an advertisement for chocolate. Their main conclusion is that children and young adolescents do not use the two routes for processing information proposed by the ELM. The involvement variable (motivation), central among adults in explaining the use of dual routes, did not appear to

have the same effect upon the young participants, as no differences in advertising effectiveness between high and low involvement were found. The authors suggest that it may be possible to view the participants' information processing as positioned somewhere between the central and peripheral routes; along a "special" (p. 334) route, where differences between low and high involvement cannot be discerned.

McAlister and Bargh (2016) tested the responsiveness of children aged three to six to advertisements for a breakfast cereal. Consistent with the ELM, high-involvement participants were responsive to the advertisement arguments, but the low-involvement participants were not. What is more, high-involvement participants' attitudes towards the cereal were more positive under the condition of strong versus weak arguments. Weak arguments and weak peripheral cues were found to *dissuade* high-involvement participants from thinking positively about the cereal. In the low-involvement condition, participants' attitudes were consistently high, regardless of the quality of the peripheral cues. This finding runs counter to ELM research with adults (where weak peripheral cues would negatively impact consumers' attitudes in conditions of low involvement). The authors conclude that young children appear "naturally predisposed to viewing products positively and only respond critically to advertisements under conditions of high involvement" (p. 221).

3.5.2 Threat appeals

Donovan and Henley (2010) propose that a threat (or fear) appeal as a communication has three main components (see figure 3.6); a *source*, a *negative outcome* and a *contingent behaviour*. The *source* informs that a negative outcome will result, if the recommended behaviour is not adopted. *Source characteristics* (likeability, credibility, expertise, impartiality) are important for message acceptance. A *negative outcome* is an event perceived to be harmful/undesirable. Fear is where the target audience perceives a harmful event is likely to affect them, with fear translated into a *threat appeal* when the source explains that the negative outcome is contingent upon the behaviour of the recipient (Donovan and Henley, 2010). An individual's *coping response* seeks to remove the threat (*adaptive* coping response – message acceptance) and/or lessen the associated fear (*maladaptive* coping response – message avoidance). Communications commonly use two threat types: *social threats* (concerned with social rejection) and *physical threats* (consequences for body and health) (Schoenbachler and Whittler, 1996; Dickinson and Holmes, 2008; Charry *et al.*, 2014). Donovan and Henley (2010) also recognise the use of *psychological threats*, e.g. a sense of failure or loss of self-esteem.

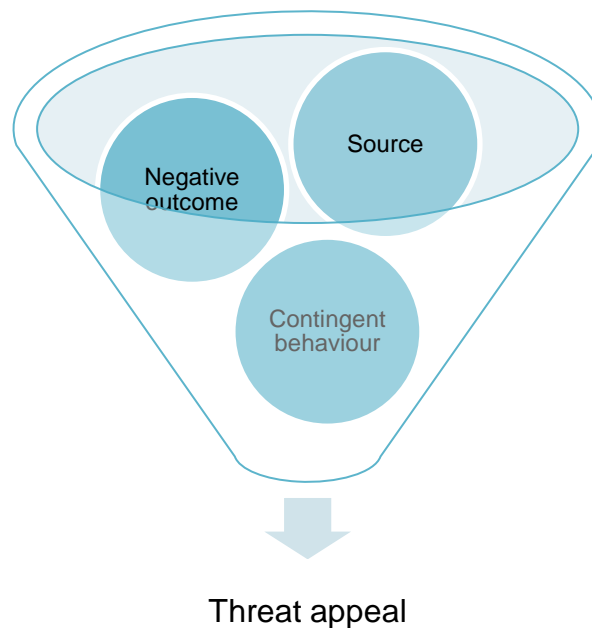


Figure 3.6: Components of a threat appeal (adapted from Donovan and Henley, 2010).

The literature suggests that threat appeals can be effective within health promotion. Job (1988) argues that fear is most likely to be effective if the campaign allows for the desired behaviour to be reinforced by a reduction in the level of fear. Witte and Allen's (2000) comprehensive meta-analysis of the threat appeal literature suggests that strong threat appeals produce the greatest changes in attitudes, intentions and behaviours (*adaptive coping response*). Such appeals need to be accompanied by high-efficacy messages, making target audiences believe they are capable of performing the recommended behaviour, which will then avert/minimise the threat. Strong threat appeals with low-efficacy messages produce the greatest levels of defensive behaviours (*maladaptive coping response*).

Charry and Pecheux (2011) found threat appeals to significantly and more favourably modify 12-year-olds' attitudes and behaviour intentions towards consumption of fruit and vegetables. Charry and Demoulin (2012) found behavioural evidence that threat appeals influence children's consumption of fruit, with indications of increased attention to and recall of advertisement content, as well as its greater accessibility in decision-making. Bleakley *et al.* (2015) found the use of threat appeals to be associated with adolescents' increased intention to cut back on sugary drinks. In the context of anti-smoking campaigns, Dickinson-Delaporte and Holmes (2011) found exposure to *social threat* communication to result in more adaptive coping responses among adolescents, compared to *physical threat* communication.

The authors propose that threats such as peer rejection may be perceived as more relevant or immediate to adolescents than physical threats, which are likely to be perceived as time-delayed (also see Dickinson and Holmes, 2008). Likewise, Schoenbachler and Whittler (1996) found that attempts to persuade adolescents to avoid drugs will be more successful in changing attitudes and behavioural intention if *social threat* messages are used, which was also found by Pechmann *et al.* (2003) in the context of anti-smoking advertisements targeting US adolescents. Pechmann *et al.* found that stressing the severity of long-term health risks appears ineffective. Few adolescents seem to feel vulnerable to such risks and advertisements using this message strategy may increase the symbolic value of smoking as a risk-seeking, rebellious and thus attractive behaviour, leading to an increase in intentions to smoke.

Despite their effectiveness, Hastings *et al.* (2004) recommend cautious use of threat appeals, recognising that much associated research has been laboratory-based, with a need to explore the effects in natural settings. They also question their long-term effects and raise potential ethical issues associated with their use, highlighting a possible lack in effectiveness with people with low self-efficacy (with potential increases in health inequalities). Using threat appeals when children are the target, may also raise ethical concerns (Charry and Pecheux, 2011; Charry and Demoulin, 2012). Charry *et al.*'s (2014) study exploring adults' acceptance of anti-obesity threat appeals targeting children, found them ready to accept ethically controversial campaigns provided that they were effective, with threats to children's physical health more acceptable than threats to their social interactions.

3.5.3 Incentive appeals

Incentive appeals work on the basis of a promise made to the target audience that if they adopt the recommended behaviour (or discontinue a harmful behaviour), the likelihood of positive consequences of compliance increases. These essentially positive appeals work when the target audience possesses the efficacy to complete the behaviour, the behaviour is perceived to deliver the benefits and the positive consequences are seen to be substantial (capable of arousing considerable positive emotion) (Donovan and Henley, 2010). Incentive appeals dominate within commercial marketing, but are equally applicable within social marketing. Hastings *et al.* (2004) propose positive reinforcement appeals aimed at good behaviour as an alternative to the use of fear appeals. Bandura (2009) recognises that modelling influences can have strong motivational effects. Vicarious motivators are based upon *outcome expectations* – seeing others obtain desired outcomes by their actions can produce outcome expectations that

function as positive “vicarious incentives” (p. 116) (whereas adverse consequences from actions create negative outcome expectations that function as disincentives). Bandura (2009) recognises that “efficacious modelling” (p. 112) not only cultivates competencies, but serves to enhance the sense of personal efficacy required to transform knowledge and skills into successful behaviour. Lowe *et al.* (2004) report on a peer modelling and rewards-based intervention shown to be effective in producing substantial increases in children’s reported liking for and consumption of fruit and vegetables.

Terming them as “converse” (p. 88), Donovan and Henley (2010) recognise that there are few systematic studies comparing the relative effectiveness of threat appeals versus incentive appeals for the same behaviour for the same target audience. However, the authors propose that threat appeals are more effective where the harmful behaviour has significant, negative health effects, whereas incentive appeals are effective where the proposed behaviour has demonstrable positive outcomes and the undesired behaviour has only moderate or low negative outcomes.

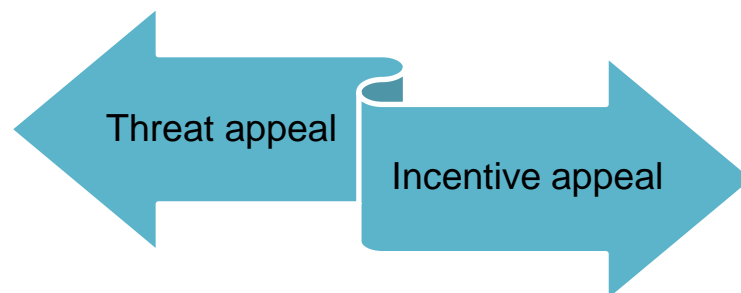


Figure 3.7: Opposite advertising appeals applicable to social marketing.

The attention will now turn to young consumers and consumer socialisation. The discussion will deal with advertising literacy and other aspects of marketplace persuasion knowledge, before it turns to the topic of adolescents and health literacy.

3.6 Developing as consumers

Marketers engage with young consumers on equal terms to adults. However, consumer skills are learned over an extended period of time, with advertising literacy and consumer scepticism developing throughout adolescence.

3.6.1 Consumer socialisation

Consumer socialisation as a concept was first defined by Ward (1974, p. 2) as “processes by which young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the marketplace”. Ward recognised that concerns regarding the effects of marketing, especially television advertising, had sparked research interest into young people’s consumer behaviour and stressed that consumer socialisation should be regarded a lifelong developmental phenomenon.

Roedder John (1999) reviews findings regarding the consumer socialisation of children reported in the marketing and communications literature from 1974 to 1998. Drawing on seminal work by Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, Roedder John incorporates her findings into a general conceptual framework. Piaget’s (1960) work outlined a developmental process, with children developing increasingly sophisticated cognitive mechanisms in order to improve their control over the world around them. Consequently, Roedder John’s framework conceives of consumer socialisation as progressing through three sequential stages, each displaying major cognitive shifts from pre-school to adolescence – *perceptual stage* (3-7 years); *analytical stage* (7-11 years) and *reflective stage* (11-16 years). The *reflective stage* is characterised by more complex, nuanced knowledge about marketplace concepts such as pricing and branding. With adolescence comes increasing awareness of the social meanings and underpinnings of the marketplace, accompanied by reflective thinking and reasoning. Heightened social awareness involves recognition of other people’s perspectives, with young consumers allowing themselves to be influenced by group expectations and simultaneously attempting to influence family and friends.

3.6.2 Advertising literacy

In terms of advertising and persuasion knowledge – *advertising literacy* – Roedder John (1999) recognises that there is still much to learn about the development from early adolescence to adulthood. Her literature review suggests that important progress takes place during adolescence in terms of increased understanding of advertising tactics, types of bias and social context. For instance, adolescents’ ability to reason about different

perspectives (advertiser and viewer) enables them to appreciate bias and deception in advertising. Friestad and Wright (1994) introduced the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM), which assumes that targets “cope” (p. 3) with persuasion attempts by drawing upon three knowledge structures; *persuasion knowledge*, *agent knowledge* (e.g. beliefs about the advertiser) and *topic knowledge* (beliefs about the message topic). The PKM assumes that persuasion knowledge develops throughout a person’s life, through the experience of being exposed to different persuasion attempts. As adolescents increase their experience in coping with advertising, their “persuasion-coping activities” become increasingly automatic and effortless to execute, and so their persuasion knowledge becomes more implicit, refined, complete and valid (Wright *et al.*, 2005, p. 227). In studying Chinese children’s perceived truthfulness of television advertising, Chan and McNeal (2004) found evidence of a developmental process of consumer socialisation, with older children relying on their personal experience as well as trust in the brand as a basis for judgement. Moore and Lutz (2000) studied the impact of food advertising in conjunction with children’s product usage experiences. Consistent with their enhanced levels of processing capacity, motivation and knowledge, older children were able to integrate the two separate stimuli of food advertising and product trial. Hence, the study confirmed older children (aged 10-11) to use advertising exposure to frame their interpretation of later product use experiences.

The age of 12 is described in the literature as a milestone, with a general understanding that by this time most children are able to appreciate the persuasive intent of television advertising (e.g. Donohue *et al.*, 1980; Butter *et al.*, 1981; Macklin, 1985; Chan, 2000; Oates *et al.*, 2002; Oates *et al.*, 2003; Pine and Veasey, 2003; Mallalieu *et al.*, 2005; Andersen *et al.*, 2008; Lawlor and Prothero, 2008). In recognition of younger children’s undeveloped understanding of advertising, the Swedish Radio and Television Act (2010: 696, chapter 8, sections 3 and 7) states that commercial advertising in television broadcasts *may not be designed to attract the attention of children younger than 12*. Further, advertisements *may not appear in, immediately before and after a programme primarily directed to viewers under the age of 12*. When determining whether a particular advertisement is aimed at attracting the attention of children under the age of 12, factors such as the *characteristics of the product*, the *creative approach of the advertisement* and *when it is broadcast* are considered (Sandgren, 2016). Much research regarding television advertising has focused on children younger than 12 and their understanding of advertising. A decade ago, Livingstone and Helsper (2006) proposed that a better understanding is required of how young consumers of all ages are influenced by advertising and recognised that adolescents as a group are under-

researched. This is echoed by more recent research (e.g. Chan *et al.*, 2009a; 2009b; Verhellen *et al.*, 2014).

3.6.3 Advertising literacy and advertising effects

Livingstone and Helsper's (2006) review of studies into the influence of television advertising on food choice identified a research gap regarding the relationship between advertising literacy and advertising effects. They maintain that age is central to advertising literacy research (frequently used as a proxy for the developmental stage), but that it is only infrequently referred to in the study of advertising effects (also see Livingstone and Helsper, 2004). Advertising literacy research and advertising effects research tend to be reviewed separately and so fail to examine their theoretical and empirical relationship. Instead, there is a widespread assumption that there is a clear relation between age and advertising literacy, with increased literacy reducing the susceptibility to advertising.

In their review of the studies included in the Hasting review (Hastings *et al.*, 2003 – a systematic review of food advertising directed at children, reviewed in section 3.8.1), Livingstone and Helsper (2006) rejected the assumption that younger children are more influenced by advertising and found evidence that children across all ages are affected. Carter *et al.* (2011) found that only a minority of 11-12-year-olds are aware of the persuasive intent of advertising, concluding that it may take children into their teenage years to develop more robust cognitive defence. Researching a sample of 12-18-year-olds, Moschis and Churchill Jr. (1979) conclude that with increasing age, adolescents generally become more sophisticated consumers, but may remain susceptible to persuasive advertising throughout adolescence. Harris *et al.* (2014) maintain that whilst adolescents may appreciate the persuasive intent of marketing, they are not immune to its influence and as such remain highly vulnerable to unhealthy food marketing. They point to research that indicates that adolescents' stage of brain development makes them highly susceptible to marketing, especially for tempting products that require well-developed self-regulatory abilities in order to resist persuasion. As such, adolescents may not be able to defend against the immediate appeal of advertising for tempting foods that may result in long-term negative health consequences. Pechman *et al.*'s (2005) review of the literature demonstrates that adolescent vulnerabilities such as impulsivity, self-consciousness and self-doubt are likely to cause adolescents to be persuaded more easily by certain marketing influences.

3.6.4 *The development of scepticism and persuasion knowledge*

Bousch *et al.* (1994) investigated young adolescents' scepticism towards advertising and their beliefs about advertisers' persuasive tactics. Scepticism involves the adolescent approaching an advertisement with an "informed discerning mind" (p. 168), able to appreciate that the advertiser and the viewer *have different interests*, that the advertiser *intends to persuade* and that the advertiser's *message may be biased*. The study found that whilst scepticism towards advertising was well established, young adolescents are still in the process of developing knowledge about advertising tactics. The researchers propose that the pattern of development discerned – scepticism precedes more sophisticated knowledge structures – may be explained by children acquiring general attitudes regarding advertisers' persuasive attempts from social role models ahead of developing specific knowledge about persuasion tactics. Linn *et al.* (1982) found adolescents able to demonstrate scepticism of advertisers and capable of naming misleading aspects of product tests in advertisements. Yet large numbers were found to disregard their scepticism and accept advertisements reporting product tests, rather than critically evaluate the claims. Overall, adolescents were found to engage in expedient reasoning about advertisements, based on limited information that lead them to accept misleading claims. Kline (2010) argues that since much advertising seeks to create brand awareness through affective rather than cognitive means by establishing a liking for the brand, concepts such as scepticism and persuasion knowledge may even bear little relevance to preference formation and not offer protection against the persuasive influence of marketing.

3.6.5 *How might adolescents be persuaded by (food) advertising?*

Livingstone and Helsper (2004) note that research findings indicating that advertising affects children of all ages, but that advertising literacy varies by age, are consistent with dual process models of persuasion. They propose the use of the ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) to distinguish persuasion processes at different stages of development.

Applying the ELM to the domain of advertising food to adolescents, Livingstone and Helsper (2004) hypothesise that adolescents are more likely to be persuaded by the central route. Adolescents are more media literate and so may be "more attentive to the creativity or informative nature of the commercial or to the value of the product in their lives and are thereby more influenced by the quality of the arguments and claims of advertising, providing that they attend, that they are motivated to engage with the message, and that its arguments are convincing" (p. 573). Livingstone and

Helsper (2004) go on to demonstrate the possibility of a theoretical link between advertising literacy and advertising effects. Referring to the work of Roedder John (1999), they highlight that her characterisation of adolescents' response to advertising as being reflective and strategic fits the central route of the ELM. Investigating attitudes to television advertising among Japanese and US adolescents, Sherry *et al.* (1999) found evidence of a shift related to cognitive stage, with older adolescents (aged 16) preferring rational advertising appeals.

3.6.6 Consumer learning and the influence of socialisation agents

Moschis and Moore (1979) state that consumer socialisation research is typically based on two models of human learning – the *cognitive development model* and the *social learning model*. Roedder John's (1999) cognitive-developmental model of consumer socialisation is an example of the former. De la Ville and Tartas (2010) maintain that socialisation should be regarded as a function of environmental influences, rather than as a purely individual cognitive process. Accordingly, the social learning model seeks to explain socialisation as a function of environmental influences applied to the person (Moschis and Moore, 1979; Valkenburg and Cantor, 2001). Learning is thought to occur during the individual's interaction with socialisation agents in various social settings. It is not necessary to subscribe to one or the other learning model, as the learning of some aspects of consumer behaviour can be a social process, as well as a cognitive developmental process of adjustment to the environment (Ward and Wackman, 1971; Moschis and Moore, 1979).

Ekström (2010) recognises that family often represents the most important socialisation agent by virtue of the frequency of interaction and close relations between family members. Investigating the development of consumer learning among adolescents, Ward and Wackman (1971) found communication with parents an especially important variable, intervening between exposure to advertisements and actual purchase. In addition, they propose that media advertising shapes the content and form of interpersonal perceptions and communications. During adolescence peers take on an important role as socialisation agents (Gunter *et al.*, 2005).

Mangleburg and Bristol (1998) found strong support for their socialisation model describing adolescent scepticism towards advertising. Their results suggest that scepticism towards advertising is an attitude learned through interaction with the socialisation agents of parents, peers and television. A *concept-oriented* family communication climate, characterised by democratic interaction and the encouragement of children to develop their problem-

solving skills, was found to assist adolescents' learning of sceptical attitudes towards advertising. *Socio-oriented* family communication, which aims to create harmonious relations in the family and promotes deference to authority, had no significant effect on the development of scepticism. Yu's (2011) research found parental mediation to be a key factor in influencing US 12-year-olds' attitudes towards television snack/fast food advertising. Children whose parents spend time watching television with them were found to have a lower BMI. Yu (2011) stresses the importance of parents' evaluation of advertisements being strategic and educational, so that it will influence their children's eating habits. Likewise, Buijzen (2009) found parents' active advertising mediation (delivery of deliberate comments/judgements about television advertisements and active explanation of the nature/selling intent of advertising) to be effective in reducing advertising effects on Dutch 12-year-olds' consumption of energy-dense foods.

In addition to the cognitive development and the social learning models, de la Ville and Tartas (2010) outline a third perspective to consumer socialisation that draws on cultural psychological theory. The perspective goes beyond the individual and proposes that socialisation takes place as a result of children participating in socio-cultural activities available in their environment, with consumption activities of particular interest. The unit of analysis is the joint activity within an interaction between a child and an adult, a child and a more experienced child or within a small group. The central focus of enquiry is how children participate in socio-cultural consumption activities and how their position changes from that of being a peripheral participant to a central participant (a decision-maker). In the realm of food and food consumption, family and friends are the most powerful agents of socialisation, including socialisation for preference and choice of different foods (Young, 2003b). Marshall and O'Donohoe (2010, p. 173) maintain that family meals are important in the socialisation process in that they teach children what constitutes a "proper meal". However, the socialisation role of the collective family meal is under threat due to increasingly individualised patterns of eating. On a positive note, Marshall and O'Donohoe's (2010) research indicates that parents are increasingly willing to empower their children and let them have a say in family decisions about food, possibly indicating a concept-oriented approach to food socialisation. Higby and Mascarenhas (1993) found parents to exert significant informative influence on adolescents both during ordinary and special food shopping, suggesting that advertising targeting adolescents should also be channelled to their parents. Further socialisation agents of relevance to food socialisation include school (Chan *et al.*, 2009a), medical professionals (Chan *et al.*, 2009b) and government sources (Chan *et al.*, 2009a).

3.6.7 Social consumption of advertising

Even young adolescents express high levels of scepticism about advertising, but enjoy watching advertisements and have been found to remember advertising better than adults (Dubow, 1995). Andersen *et al.* (2008) found Danish young consumers approaching adolescence already to have developed negative attitudes towards television advertising, but that they reacted favourably towards its entertainment value. Ritson and Elliott's (1995; 1999) ethnographic study with adolescents found that advertising can form the basis for a wide variety of social interactions. Individual adolescents were found to possess a personal portfolio of continuously updated favourite advertisements, which would provide the ticket of entry into social evaluation of cool advertisements. The researchers conclude that advertising is itself a cultural product that can be consumed independently of the product advertised. As a result, they propose an expansion of the concept of the advertising context to include the social setting of the viewer. Gunter *et al.* (2005) recognise that this social consumption of advertising may in turn affect the impact of advertising campaigns.

Figure 3.8 provides an overview of key characteristics of adolescents identified in this literature review. The next section explores adolescents' relationship to healthy eating, both in terms of their perceptions of healthy eating and factors that may prevent them from engaging in such behaviour.

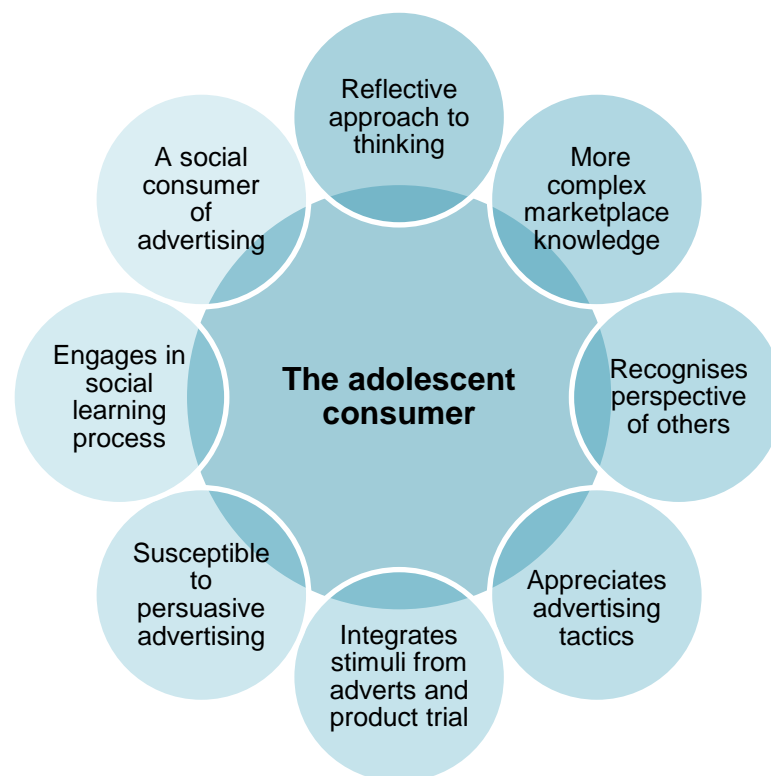


Figure 3.8: Key characteristics of the adolescent consumer (Sherrington, 2016).

3.7 Adolescents and healthy eating

Chan *et al.* (2009a; 2011b) maintain that for healthy eating messages to resonate with young consumers, a thorough appreciation of their perceptions of healthy and unhealthy eating, socialisation agents and different communications appeals is required. There is a lack of research associated with these issues in the context of adolescents (Chan *et al.*, 2009a; 2011a).

3.7.1 Adolescents' perceptions of healthy eating

Focus groups with participants aged 13-15 in Hong Kong found that adolescents' perceptions of healthy eating tend to focus on the composition and nature of the diet, as well as the timing and quantity of the food intake. Parents, school and medical professionals were reported as most important in encouraging healthy eating. It was found that unhealthy foods tend to be consumed in social contexts away from home with peer pressure experienced to prepare/consume unhealthy foods (Chan *et al.*, 2009b). Chan *et al.* (2009a) report similar findings in a survey with Hong Kong respondents aged 12-16; adolescents frequently consume unhealthy foods away from home and parents represent the most persistent socialisation agents for healthy eating. Communication regarding healthy eating from government sources was also reported as frequent, although less effective than parental communication. Teachers and friends were found to represent less frequent/effective sources of healthy eating messages. As a consequence, the researchers propose a *two-pronged approach* to healthy eating messages by (1) targeting the increasingly independent adolescents directly and (2) indirectly targeting adolescents via parents.

A survey conducted by Chan and Tsang (2011) with Hong Kong participants aged 11-18 (mean age 14.5) found healthy eating to be socially acceptable among young consumers. Participants valued healthy eating and did not experience social pressure to eat unhealthily, but perceived healthy eating to be boring and lacking in enjoyment, leading the researchers to highlight the need to associate fun and enjoyment with healthy eating. Family and government publicity were found to be important factors in establishing subjective norms for healthy eating. Chan *et al.* (2011a) report on a survey conducted in Denmark (respondents aged 12-15) and in Hong Kong (respondents aged 12-16). There was evidence that healthy eating messages based on the food pyramid had successfully reached adolescents, but that interventions are required assisting the translation of healthy eating knowledge into behaviour. For both societies it was found that healthy eating is most often practised at home. Further, Danish respondents were found to be more likely to practise healthy eating at school than their Chinese

counterparts. Unhealthy foods, on the other hand, tend to be consumed in social contexts away from home for both groups, leading the researchers to recommend a two-pronged communications approach similar to that of Chan *et al.* (2009a).

A study by Young and Fors (2001) found an important relationship between family connectedness and children's consumption of a healthy breakfast and lunch (also see Dixey *et al.*, 2001; Hesketh *et al.*, 2005; Taylor *et al.*, 2005; Chan *et al.*, 2009b). Seaman *et al.* (1997) found Scottish children to have sound nutrition knowledge, but limited evidence that healthy eating knowledge is being applied in practice. Johansson *et al.* (2009) conducted an ethnographic study with children from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden with the purpose of studying their reflections around various food messages that they encounter. The children presented photographs from their personal "foodscapes" (p. 30), the places and contexts where they consume and come into contact with foods. The study found that rather than there being a dichotomy between healthy and unhealthy foods, there was a continuum. There was evidence of the Scandinavian "just-enough-ideal" (p. 47); consuming "just enough" to deal with issues of foods being unhealthy. In other words, unhealthy foods are allowed occasionally and in moderation. (N.B. The *just-enough-ideal* is a Swedish concept, which can be applied to a range of contexts. It has its own descriptive label – "lagom".)

3.7.2 Barriers to healthy eating

The literature highlights some barriers to children practising healthy eating. It may simply be the case that due to their early life, children do not perceive a sense of urgency about personal health (Evans *et al.*, 1995; Neumark-Sztainer *et al.*, 1999; Croll *et al.*, 2001; Power *et al.*, 2010). Dixey *et al.* (2001) found children to speak about issues of healthy eating with considerable insight, but that they made it clear that they would not be coerced into a healthier lifestyle. In a study by Stevenson *et al.* (2007) adolescents reported a tension in media messages, as these encourage eating-pleasure through the promotion of energy-dense foods, but that media images concurrently reinforce the contradictory image of thinness as the attractive ideal.

Hesketh *et al.*'s (2005) study found child peer pressure to represent a major barrier to a healthy lifestyle. Rähä *et al.* (2006), on the other hand, found the Finnish 13-14-year-olds in their study to have positive attitudes towards healthy eating with the majority considering themselves able to make nutritious choices regardless of their friends' unhealthy nutrition habits. Chan and Tsang's (2011) study found Hong Kong adolescents to regard healthy

eating as beneficial and desirable, but boring and unenjoyable, with the researchers calling for further research to establish the causes of these perceptions and possible counter-measures. Gerrits *et al.* (2009) found Dutch adolescents to hold unfavourable social images of unhealthy eaters their own age and favourable images of healthy eaters. Their positive evaluations of healthy eaters, however, were not found to be related to their own consumption of healthy foods, leading the researchers to question the use of positive images of healthy eaters when promoting healthy eating to adolescents. They suggest that communications drawing upon peer norms and questioning whether it is sensible to consume unhealthy foods may prove more successful at changing unhealthy eating patterns among adolescents.

Martens *et al.* (2005) investigated the relative importance of personal and social environmental predictors of fruit, high-fat snacks and breakfast consumption among Dutch 12-14-year-olds. Their results indicate that dietary behaviour may not be a strongly reasoned action in the age group and recommend that healthy diet-promoting interventions should look for creative and alternative ways to enable adolescents to have positive associations with healthy dietary changes.

The presence of health inequalities has been noted, with the risks of childhood obesity greatest in lower socio-economic groups (WHO, 2013; Swedish National Institute of Public Health, 2014; WHO, 2016). Additionally, in the current obesogenic environment, children consume energy-dense, processed foods that are cheap and readily available (Kline 2011; WHO, 2016). Fresh, organic foods tend to be sold at a premium price and so may not be affordable to families who are struggling financially. The UK has seen an increase in people needing support from food banks (BBC News, 2015c) and clearly, for families in need of support, the extent to which the handouts are healthy is not going to be their foremost priority.

Table 3.2 provides an overview of potential barriers interfering with young consumers' healthy eating. Within Hastings and Domegan's (2014) strategic vision of social marketing, these barriers represent *competition* to healthy eating.

Lack of perceived urgency about personal health	•Evans <i>et al.</i> (1995); Neumark-Sztainer <i>et al.</i> (1999); Croll <i>et al.</i> (2001); Power <i>et al.</i> (2001)
Children unwilling to be coerced into a healthier lifestyle	•Dixey <i>et al.</i> (2001)
Current advertising messages encourage eating pleasure	•Stevenson <i>et al.</i> (2007)
Peer pressure to consume unhealthy foods	•Hesketh <i>et al.</i> (2005); Chan <i>et al.</i> (2009b)
A perception of healthy eating as uninspiring	•Chan and Tsang (2011)
A lack of involvement concerning dietary behaviour	•Martens <i>et al.</i> (2005)
Health inequalities between socio-economic groups	•WHO (2013); Swedish National Institute of Public Health (2014); WHO (2016)

Table 3.2: Barriers to healthy eating identified in the literature.

The attention will now turn to the literature associated with television food advertising targeting children, taking a particular interest in adolescent consumers.

3.8 What is the extent and content of food advertising targeting children?

Reviewing the literature associated with advertising to children is complex because of its expanse, spanning a range of academic disciplines (Livingstone and Helsper, 2004). The following section will review studies from marketing, psychology, health education, paediatrics, medicine, nutrition, ethics and public policy.

3.8.1 Findings from systematic reviews

Spanning more than 30 years, the Hastings review (Hastings *et al.*, 2003) was commissioned by the Food Standards Agency in the UK and represented the first systematic review of international research literature dealing with the effects of food promotion on children in developed economies. The study reported that food promotion to children is dominated by television advertising and that the advertised diet contrasts sharply with that recommended by public health advice. Advertisements typically portray

highly processed, energy-dense, unhealthy food with powerful branding, characteristic of the 'Big Five' – *pre-sugared breakfast cereal, soft drinks, confectionary, savoury snacks* and *fast food outlets*. Healthier foods like fruit and vegetables are rarely advertised.

A subsequent systematic review prepared for the WHO (Hastings *et al.*, 2006) extended the evidence base to include research carried out in low-income countries. This report confirmed the findings of the Hastings review (Hastings *et al.*, 2003) in terms of the extent and nature of food promotion targeting children. A 2009 systematic review of research associated with food and drinks marketing aimed at children represents the most recent internationally comprehensive review of the evidence base (Cairns *et al.* 2009; 2013). The review was commissioned by the WHO to inform the development of a set of recommendations on food marketing to children. Again, it found no changes in terms of the nutritional quality of products promoted as outlined in the preceding report (Hastings *et al.*, 2006).

More recent studies show that little has changed. Scully *et al.* (2015) found food products to be the most commonly advertised products during children's programming in Ireland. Advertisements for fast food and sweets were especially frequent, whereas advertisements for healthier foods such as fruit and vegetables were absent. Roberts *et al.* (2014) found 65% of advertisements scheduled during children's popular viewing times on Australian television to be for *non-core foods* (those that provide nutrients and/or energy in excess of daily requirements). In a content analysis on the main Italian national television channels, Puggelli and Bertolotti (2014) found nearly two thirds of food advertisements to be for unhealthy food products. It was found that healthy and unhealthy food advertisements aim for different target audiences, with healthy foods predominately targeting adults (68.2%; the rest a mixed audience, i.e. children and adults; 31.8%). Unhealthy foods, however, mainly target children (37.5%) (42.5% targeting a mixed audience and 20% targeting adults).

The systematic reviews presented above deliver evidence of relevance to children generally, whilst few studies deal with adolescents specifically. Powell *et al.* (2007) present the first study examining the content of advertising *exposure* specifically among US adolescents aged 12-17 (television *viewing* frequently used as a proxy). By using Nielsen Media Research television ratings data for each television advertisement, actual advertisement exposure could be determined. It was found that food-related advertising makes up nearly a quarter of advertised products viewed by adolescents. Fast food, sweets and drinks were found to account for the majority of advertisements, all items within the reach of adolescents' purchasing power. Utter *et al.* (2006) present similar findings regarding the

nature of television food advertising exposure of young adolescents in New Zealand.

3.8.2 *The situation in the UK and Sweden*

In 2007, Ofcom introduced measures to restrict the scheduling of television advertising of food and drinks products to children. This followed mounting concerns over rising childhood obesity levels and the over-consumption of HFSS foods. The scheduling restrictions are confined to food and drinks assessed as HFSS as defined by the Food Standard Agency's nutrient profiling scheme (Department of Health, 2011a). The restrictions were phased in, gaining full effect from January 2009 and involved the removal of HFSS advertising from children's television channels. What is more, HFSS advertising must not be shown in and around programmes with particular appeal to children under the age of 16 (BCAP Code, 2010, sections 32.5 – 32.5.1). These restrictions apply equally to programme sponsorship by HFSS food and drinks products (Ofcom, 2007).

Oates and Newman (2010) found that Ofcom's regulations regarding HFSS products have been largely successful. Taking a wider perspective, they investigated what and how much food British children are exposed to during their everyday television viewing in terms of advertising, sponsorship and editorial content. Dickinson and Leader (1997, p. 347) have previously recognised the importance of the "total TV message", as advertisements appear within and between programmes that depict both food and eating behaviour (also see Avery *et al.*, 1997). Oates and Newman's content analysis encompassed programmes, sponsorship, trailers, idents and advertising on CBBC, CBeebies, CiTV and Five. Over 50% of foods featured in trailers and idents were unhealthy. The majority of food mentions in programmes tended to be healthy, but CBBC (targeting older children) had the lowest percentage with 57.2% of food categorised as healthy.

Whilst Oates and Newman's (2010) study dealt with children's programmes, Boyland *et al.*'s (2011) study of more than 5,000 hours of television on the channels most popular with young British viewers demonstrates that children are still exposed to more advertising for unhealthy than healthy foods and that this also applies at children's peak viewing times. Boyland *et al.* (2013) highlight that programmes with particular appeal to children are identified through the use of audience indexing: Advertising restrictions are applied if the programmes have an audience in which the proportion of viewers under the age of 16 is at least 20% higher than the proportion of this age group in the general population. As a result, food advertising restrictions do not apply to programmes that also attract a high number of adult viewers. This is the

case for most family programming and primetime entertainment shows in particular (also see Boseley, 2013). This would appear to be in direct breach of the second of the WHO's *Recommendations on the Marketing of Foods and Non-alcoholic Beverages to Children* (WHO, 2010), which states that the effectiveness of marketing is partly a function of exposure and that as such, the policy objective must be to reduce the exposure of children to marketing of HFSS foods.

This literature review identified few studies dealing specifically with the extent of television food advertising in Sweden. A study carried out in 2005 on behalf of the Nordic Council of Ministers claims to be the first initiative specifically addressing the unhealthy foods marketing targeting Swedish children, with a similar follow-up study in 2007 (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2006; 2008). The second study found unhealthy foods marketing targeting children to have dropped in 2007 compared to 2005, but that the amount of unhealthy foods in television advertising in general had increased, still providing an unrepresentative picture of an appropriate diet. The drop in unhealthy foods advertising targeting children was explained by the rules associated with HFSS foods in the UK, as the Swedish television channels TV3, TV6 and Kanal 5 broadcast via satellite from London and so are bound by Ofcom's rules. The finding that 64% of food advertising appeared adjacent to television series, for instance of the family entertainment type, is significant, as these types of programmes have been found to attract large numbers of children (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2008). Importantly, the earlier study highlighted the lack of television advertisements for fruit and vegetables (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2006).

Klepp *et al.* (2007) performed a cross-sectional survey with school children (mean age 11.4 years) in nine European countries, including Sweden. Across all countries, most children reported exposure to television advertisements for food, with more frequent exposure to advertisements for foods high in sugar and fat than for fruit and vegetables. Kelly *et al.* (2010) investigated the frequency and nature of television food advertising in eleven countries across the world, including Sweden and the UK. The majority (66%) of food advertisements during children's (aged 3-12) peak viewing times were for HFSS foods.

3.9 How is food portrayed in advertising?

The three systematic reviews identified in the previous section (Hastings *et al.*, 2003; 2006 and Cairns *et al.*, 2009) are unanimous in their findings regarding the creative strategies used. Food advertisements directed at children are likely to deploy entertainment techniques, using such appeal

themes as *taste*, *humour*, *action-adventure*, *fantasy* and *fun*. The use of a humorous tone appears to be a well-entrenched theme in food advertisements, with early researchers such as Atkin and Heald (1977) identifying fun associated with the product as the major type of message claim used in television food advertising targeting children in the US. Apart from *taste*, these appeal themes represent peripheral cues in the ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Themes of *health* and *nutrition*, central arguments in the ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986), tend to feature rarely, only regularly used by advertisements for breakfast cereals. Again, the systematic reviews do not feature age of the target audience as part of the analysis. This literature review has identified only limited analysis dealing with the creative strategies employed in food advertising targeting adolescents.

*Disclaimers*⁵ may be used by breakfast cereals, but rarely by other food products. A content analysis of television food advertising to children in the US found that peripheral cues dominate in advertising for both low- and general-nutrition foods (in the absence of a clear definition, the former appears to relate to HFSS foods and the latter to 'everyday foods', not necessarily particularly healthy) (Kim *et al.*, 2016).

Roberts and Pettigrew (2007) recognise that content analysis research has concentrated on the *quantity* of food advertising as well as the *types* of food advertised, with less known about food attitudes and behaviour modelled in advertising and how young consumers understand these communications, a concern echoed by Hastings *et al.* (2006). Boyland *et al.* (2012) recognise that persuasive techniques in television food advertising are under-researched and that this is especially the case outside of the US. The recommendations set out by the WHO on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic drinks to children identify the content, design and execution of the marketing message as influencing the power of the marketing communication (WHO, 2010). As such, the lack of research attention paid to persuasive techniques represents an important gap in the literature.

3.9.1 *The situation in the UK and Sweden*

Addressing the research gap of persuasive techniques, Boyland *et al.*'s (2012) study represents the most comprehensive analysis conducted of the nature of food advertising on the UK television channels most popular with children. Nearly 19,000 food advertisements broadcast by 14 commercial channels during 2008 were analysed. This was at a time when Ofcom was phasing in the statutory legislation concerning HFSS advertising. Boyland *et*

⁵ *Disclaimers* provide information necessary for an accurate understanding of a product, e.g. nutritional information in a food advertisement (Wicks *et al.*, 2009, p. 96).

al.'s (2012) report does provide some analysis of the persuasive techniques used in food advertisements aimed at adolescents, with the primary persuasive appeal used to advertise foods to adolescents found to be different from that used with younger children. *Taste* represented the appeal most frequently used (25.4%) in advertisements targeting adolescents, followed by *health/nutrition* (11.9%), which in turn was followed by the use of a *premium/contest* (10.6%). 46.6% of the advertisements directed the adolescent viewers to a website. The most commonly used primary persuasive appeal in food advertisements targeting younger children was *fun* (50.8%), followed by *taste* (15.7%), *premium/contest* (13.5%) and then *health/nutrition* (7.4%). Boyland *et al.* (2012) do not provide a complete listing of the primary persuasive appeals used in the food advertisements aimed at adolescents. There is also no indication of the types of food generally depicted in the advertisements featuring a particular primary appeal, although it is noteworthy that the majority of advertisements were for non-core foods.

A similar large-scale study for television food advertising in Sweden has not been identified. However, Prell *et al.*'s (2011) study of 82 television food advertisements broadcast during children's peak viewing times on the three most popular commercial channels with Swedish children investigates the persuasive messages used. The study refers to children, without making reference to particular ages. However, the advertisements were for types of products/brands relevant to children and adults alike.

Prell *et al.*'s (2011) use of discourse analysis generates insight into how food is articulated in health discourse, providing a qualitative appreciation absent in the majority of studies on creative strategy (which tend to use a quantitative content analytical approach). Out of 82 advertisements, 58 were found to use *health appeals* and these became the focus of Prell *et al.*'s analysis. The analysis discerned three health discourse types; a *medical* (food as protection and treatment), a *hedonic* (food as feeling good) and a *social* discourse type (food as caring). The researchers contend that these three health discourse types "offer spaces within which foods can be understood and conceptualised" (p. 614). Prell *et al.* (2011) emphasise the importance of drawing attention to discursive structures of food in advertising, as these act as constructions of food and health that children are exposed to.

Importantly, Prell *et al.* (2011) found that health arguments were employed for all types of foods, even HFSS foods. For instance, their analysis shows how by promoting the natural and healthy composition of potato crisps (e.g. *100% sunflower oil, naturally healthier, nature crisps*, etc.) the final message may be interpreted as being that the promoted crisps are especially healthy. Consequently, using health claims with unhealthy foods may highlight

positive aspects, while obscuring those damaging to health. The study also found associations with *physical activity* and *sports* to be common in food advertisements, a strategy that the researchers suggest might make the advertised food appear healthier and so promote consumption. Prell *et al.* (2011) suggest that parents and children should be encouraged to develop their critical thinking about television food advertising and how it may influence social norms and dietary practices.

3.9.2 *An inappropriate emphasis on health claims*

Further to Prell *et al.*'s (2011) findings above, Castonguay *et al.*'s (2013) content analysis of television food advertisements targeting US children found the majority of nutritionally poor foods to contain health-related messages, with those for fast foods and sugared cereals most likely to do so. Roberts and Pettigrew's (2007) content analysis of food advertising on Australian children's television involved thematic analysis of the messages contained in the advertisements. Four major themes were identified; *portrayal of snacking* (rather than regular meals), *denigration of core foods* (in conjunction with the depiction of desirable packaged alternatives), *exaggerated health claims* and *enhancement of popularity, performance and mood*. Some advertisements were found to imply a relationship between consuming the food and exceptional sporting endeavours.

Folta *et al.*'s (2006) content analysis of food advertisements during US children's television programming found frequent association between food products and *physical activity*, in some cases even with *increased athletic ability*. Other common associations were *fun and good times*, *pleasant taste*, *being cool/hip* and *feelings of happiness*. The researchers recognise that at best, the portrayal of physical activity could encourage children to become more active, but at worst may promote over-consumption, especially of energy-dense, nutrient poor foods. Many of these creative tactics would be in direct violation of the rules outlined in the *UK Code of Broadcast Advertising* (BCAP, 2010) regarding the advertising of food and making associated health or nutrition claims. Table 3.3 summarises the previous discussion by listing common creative appeals in food advertisements targeting adolescents.

Taste	•Folta <i>et al.</i> (2006); Roberts and Pettigrew (2007); Boyland <i>et al.</i> (2012)
Health/nutrition	•Prell <i>et al.</i> (2011); Boyland <i>et al.</i> (2012); Puggelli and Bertolotti (2014)
Association with physical activity/increased athletic ability	•Folta <i>et al.</i> (2006); Roberts and Pettigrew (2007)
Feelings of happiness	•Folta <i>et al.</i> (2006); Roberts and Pettigrew (2007)
Being cool, enhancement of popularity	•Folta <i>et al.</i> (2006); Roberts and Pettigrew (2007)
Premium/contest	•Boyland <i>et al.</i> (2012)

Table 3.3: Appeals used in food advertisements targeting adolescents.

3.9.3 The concept of the wider food context

Adams *et al.* (2011) present the first British study investigating the “wider food context” (p. 810) in which foods are advertised on television. The study investigated food advertising during one week on ITV1 in 2008, comparing the nutritional content of advertised products – *primary products* – with that of *incidental food products*; non-branded products shown alongside the primary products. When a wider food context was present, that context tended to be healthier than the primary foods being advertised (mostly HFSS). Potential effects of the wider food context on consumers’ perceptions and behaviour as yet unknown, Adams *et al.* (2011) recognise that it is unclear whether it should be encouraged or discouraged from a public health perspective. On the one hand, positioning less healthy foods in a healthy food context may reinforce the importance of a healthy diet. On the other hand, the advertised food may enjoy an “unjustified aura of healthiness” (p. 814).

3.10 What are the effects of food advertising on children?

Hastings *et al.* (2003) conclude that there is sufficient evidence that food advertising influences children’s *food preferences, purchase behaviour* and *consumption*. Scully *et al.* (2012) found that greater exposure to commercial television viewing was independently associated with Australian adolescents’

food choices. Hastings *et al.* (2003) recognise that studies tend to investigate direct effects on children, overlooking indirect effects. Accordingly, fast food advertising may not only influence the child, but also encourage parents to take their children to a fast food restaurant, reinforcing this as a normal and desirable behaviour (also see Livingstone and Helsper, 2004; Livingstone, 2005).

The Hastings review found the effect of food promotion to be independent of other factors operating both at brand and product category levels, with the power to instigate both brand switching and increased consumption of the product category (Hastings *et al.*, 2003). As for the size of these effects, few studies have attempted to determine their strength relative to other influences on children's food choices (Hastings *et al.*, 2003; Livingstone and Helsper, 2004).

3.10.1 The impact of advertising on nutritional knowledge

Concerning *nutritional knowledge* (perceptions/understanding of healthy and unhealthy foods; composition of a balanced diet; nutritional value of different food products; composition of processed foods; nutritional concepts), Hastings *et al.* (2003) were unable to draw firm conclusions due to a mixed evidence base. They maintain that evidence suggests that food advertising is unlikely to influence children's general perceptions of what constitutes a healthy diet, although a modest effect on certain types of nutritional knowledge may occur. Given that most television advertisements are for unhealthy foods, a hope for them to contribute positively to children's health literacy would probably be unrealistic. The *UK Code of Broadcast Advertising* (BCAP, 2010, p. 56) states that whilst food advertising cannot be expected to perform the same role as education/public information in promoting a balanced diet, it should not "undermine progress towards national dietary improvement by misleading or confusing consumers or by setting a bad example, especially to children".

3.10.2 The impact of advertising on food preferences, food behaviour and obesity

In terms of *food preferences* (liking for specific foods; preferences between different foods), the Hastings review (Hastings *et al.*, 2003) found reasonably robust evidence of food advertising having an effect. In relation to *food behaviour* (purchasing; purchase-related behaviour; consumption behaviour; diet and health status), strong evidence for influences upon children's food purchases and children's attempts to influence parental food shopping was

found, as well as modest evidence for an effect on consumption behaviour. These findings have been confirmed by findings of the two subsequent systematic reviews referred to earlier (Hastings *et al.*, 2006; Cairns *et al.*, 2009).

The review found evidence of small but significant associations between television viewing and diet, and television viewing and obesity. However, as the potential effect of television advertising could not be disentangled from the general effect of television viewing, Hastings *et al.* (2003) conclude that it is unclear whether the cause is *advertising*, the *sedentary nature of television viewing* or *snacking whilst watching*. Livingstone and Helsper (2004) found support for all three explanations, but recognise the lack of research attempting to disentangle these factors.

Buijzen *et al.* (2008) explain that the role of advertising is relevant to the obesity debate only when advertising exposure leads to more generic consumption of product categories (*product category effects*) that receive heavy advertising support (i.e. HFSS foods), rather than simply brand choice (*brand effects*). The existence of category effects has been disputed by other researchers (Young 2003a; 2003b; Ambler, 2006), calling for longitudinal studies and more robust experimental designs to be able to confirm category effects.

Engle and Ambler (2002) report on a study assessing the impact of advertising on the size of five European chocolate confectionary markets, prompted by suggestions that reduced chocolate consumption may improve public health and that this can be achieved by reduced brand advertising. The study failed to find a significant association between advertising expenditure and changes in market size. Absence of data prevented the researchers from isolating the advertising seen by children and their chocolate consumption from the market as a whole. Engle and Ambler maintain that since children's consumption is likely to take place predominantly within a family context, different findings would have been unlikely. This conclusion, however, would need to be questioned on the basis that children are known to have significant influence over household spending and the fact that adolescents engage in discretionary spending, frequently involving confectionary. Boynton-Jarrett *et al.* (2003, p. 1325) present findings that suggest that television viewing may contribute to a decline in overall fruit and vegetable consumption among US adolescents. The researchers propose that the use of intense television advertising shapes nutritional beliefs, attitudes and consumption patterns, with adolescents replacing fruit and vegetables with other unhealthy foods marketed as "nutritious".

3.10.3 Adolescents and the effects of food advertising

The effects of food advertising on adolescents' food choices and eating behaviour in particular are less established than for younger children (Scully *et al.*, 2012). Utter *et al.* (2006) report on a secondary data analysis of a nationally representative, cross-sectional survey of how the amount of television viewing is associated with the dietary behaviour of New Zealand adolescents (aged 11-14). The findings indicate that television viewing is an independent correlate of obesity among adolescents. Analysis suggests that the relationship between television viewing and obesity may be mediated by exposure to television advertising, as adolescents who watched the most television were significantly more likely to be higher consumers of foods most commonly advertised on television (sugary drinks, sweets, snacks and fast food) and less likely to be high consumers of fruit.

Buijzen *et al.*'s (2008) study with Dutch children (up to the age of 12) used a research design that combined a structured food diary with questionnaire data and advertising broadcast data. The study confirmed that advertising for energy-dense products influences not only children's consumption of the advertised brands, but also more generic consumption of energy-dense food (i.e. produces category effects). Scully *et al.* (2012) report on a cross-sectional survey investigating the associations between food advertising exposure and Australian adolescents' food choices. Exposure to commercial television was found to be independently associated with adolescents' food choices. Adolescents who watched more than two hours of commercial television per day reported a higher consumption of fast food, sugary drinks, and sweet/salty snacks, compared to adolescents who did not watch commercial television.

Russell and Buhrau's (2015) study examined whether and to what degree television exposure influences US adolescents' (aged 12-17) fast-food beliefs, in particular regarding perceived health risks of fast-food consumption. Heavy television viewing was found to be related to both greater perceived positive consequences and fewer perceived health risks of consuming fast food. Perceptions of positive consequences were found to remain even as direct experiences with fast food increased.

3.11 What is currently known about advertising for healthy foods?

In light of available evidence regarding the effects of food advertising, Cairns *et al.* (2013) call for a re-orientation of the aim of research to assist the implementation of public policy, such as the WHO *Recommendations on the Marketing of Foods and Drinks to Children* (2010).

It has been proposed that on the basis that strategies for unhealthy foods appear to work, the same strategies may be adopted in order to promote healthy foods (e.g. Folta *et al.*, 2006; Kelly *et al.*, 2006; Dias and Agante, 2011; Puggelli and Bertolotti, 2014). However, this area of the literature is under-developed (Moon, 2010; Boyland *et al.*, 2012; Cairns *et al.*, 2013), with few studies specifically investigating what creative strategies may be appropriate. The evidence concerning the effects of healthy food advertising is also limited.

3.11.1 How does advertising for healthy and unhealthy foods differ?

Puggelli and Bertolotti (2014) provide some insight in this area with their comparison of advertisements for healthy and unhealthy foods on Italian television. Accordingly, unhealthy food advertisements tend to have a higher proportion of school-age children, whereas adults feature more frequently in advertisements for healthy foods. Characters in unhealthy food advertisements are more often portrayed as sons or friends, whereas parental figures are more frequently used in those for healthy foods. This is in line with findings associated with food socialisation outlined in section 3.6.6, namely that parents are the most important socialisation agents in encouraging healthy eating (e.g. Chan *et al.*, 2009b; Ekström, 2010), unhealthy foods tend to be consumed in social contexts away from home (Chan *et al.*, 2011a) and child peer pressure may represent a barrier to a healthy lifestyle (Hesketh *et al.*, 2005). Concerning the typology of consumption, group consumption (family meals, school canteens and parties) is most common in advertisements for unhealthy foods, whereas individual consumption is dominant in advertisements for healthy foods (Puggelli and Bertolotti, 2014).

Analysis of the communicative formats demonstrated that healthy food advertisements feature cognitively complex stimuli (e.g. text on main product features), whereas unhealthy food advertisements use more vivid imagery and sound (e.g. cartoons, visual effects, music and jingles) to grab the attention of a young audience. In terms of the appeals used, health appeals are more frequently used for healthy foods, which also employ an emotional tone that revolves around complex social emotions associated with care, control and dependence. Advertisements for unhealthy foods rely on vivid emotional appeals (positive or negative) and celebrity appeals (Puggelli and Bertolotti, 2014).

Linking back to the discussion in section 3.6.5 on how adolescents may be persuaded by advertising, the communicative formats and the appeals described above would appear to be consistent with dual process models of

persuasion. Consequently, advertisements for healthy foods tend to employ the *central route to persuasion* (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986), whereby the advertisement encourages the receiver to pay attention to the beneficial characteristics of the product. On the contrary, advertisements for unhealthy foods tend to use the *peripheral route to persuasion* (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986), where persuasion happens as a result of the peripheral cues of the message, for instance via visual effects, music and jingles.

3.11.2 How might advertising of healthy eating/foods work?

Batrinou and Kanellou (2009, p. 511) claim there is an inverted relationship between the “food advertising pyramid” and the Mediterranean food pyramid in Greece. Foods in the base of the latter pyramid (the recommended diet) – cereals, fruit and vegetables – only receive 9% of total advertising expenditure. Goldberg and Gunasti (2007, p. 169) highlight the importance of altering the balance of healthful to unhealthful food advertising. They point to heavy advertising for HFSS foods leading to a perception that such foods are consumed more frequently than is the case with this perceived norm “validating” these foods, encouraging their consumption.

Dixon *et al.* (2007) explored associations between Australian children’s cumulative exposure to television food advertising and their attitudes, beliefs and reported frequency of consumption of unhealthy food. Cumulative exposure was found to be associated with beliefs and attitudes supportive of those foods that are most frequently advertised on television, namely, fast foods, confectionary and sugary drinks. This is consistent with the *cultivation hypothesis*; more frequent television viewers are more likely to hold beliefs that reflect messages that are dominant and recurrent on television. Further, the finding is consistent with the *behavioural perspective*; advertising of unhealthy foods supports unhealthy eating behaviour by reinforcing and normalising that behaviour. As a consequence, the authors recommend amending the food advertising environment on children’s television to one where healthy foods are advertised and unhealthy foods are not, with the aim of normalising and reinforcing healthy eating (Dixon *et al.*, 2007).

Klepp *et al.* (2007) provide evidence of the potentially positive effect of healthy food advertising. Their survey with children (mean age 11.4 years) in nine European countries including Sweden, found a weak but significant association between exposure to fruit and vegetable television advertisements and reported intake of fruit and vegetables. Charry’s (2014) findings indicate that product placement of fruit and vegetables on children’s television using an educational, entertaining message may fulfil pro-social

objectives of encouraging increased fruit and vegetables consumption, consistent with the cultivation perspective outlined above (Dixon *et al.*, 2007).

3.11.3 What advertising appeals might be appropriate?

Boyland *et al.*'s (2012) analysis of food advertising on UK television identified that advertisements targeting adolescents tend to emphasise *taste*, *health/nutrition* and *premiums*, leading the researchers to propose that appeals such as these may also be suitable for promoting healthier dietary choices, an approach echoed by other researchers (e.g. Foltz *et al.*, 2006; Dias and Agante, 2011; Puggelli and Bertolotti, 2014). Goldberg and Gunasti (2006) maintain that educational messages regarding nutrition are likely to need combining with a strategy that links healthy foods to key youth motives and call for research to identify such motives. The literature review has located a small number of studies reporting insight regarding advertising appeals from Hong Kong, Denmark, France, Canada and South Korea:

In a survey, 12-16-year-old Hong Kong participants evaluated their liking for and perceived effectiveness of five fictitious print advertisements discouraging consumption of soft drinks, all using a different appeal – *popularity*, *love*, *achievement*, *news* and *threat*. The appeals were perceived as equally likeable, with respondents most receptive to *news* and *threat appeals* (Chan *et al.*, 2009a). In focus groups conducted with 13-15-year-olds in Hong Kong by Chan *et al.* (2009b), *threat appeals* emerged as appropriate for promoting healthy eating. Chan and Tsang (2011) report support for healthy eating messages having a positive impact on the intention to eat healthily among Hong Kong adolescents aged 11-19, with *news appeals* perceived by participants to be the most effective communication strategy. In a survey with Danish and Hong Kong adolescents aged 11-16, Danish participants perceived *love*, *achievement* and *threat appeals* as more likeable and the *threat appeal* as most effective in communicating healthy eating. The Hong Kong respondents perceived all five appeals (*popularity*, *love*, *achievement*, *news* and *threat*) as equally likeable, but confirmed *news* and *threat appeals* to be most effective. It should be noted that the *threat appeal* used was related to *fear of social rejection* rather than *fear of health damage*, reflecting adoption of healthy eating for *fear of social rejection* due to overweight (see section 3.5.2 for a discussion).

In response to the proposal of adopting appeals successfully used by unhealthy foods advertising, Charry and Demoulin (2012) maintain that advertising campaigns for healthy foods based on the typical food industry appeals of *fun*, *fantasy* and *action/adventure* may not be sufficiently striking

to counterbalance the heavy pressure from HFSS advertising. In an experiment with French children aged 8-12, *threat appeals* were found to influence children's healthy consumption more significantly than typical appeals. *Threat appeals* appeared to increase attention to and recall of the content of the advertisement and to contribute to greater saliency in decision-making. The researchers recognise that the distinctiveness of the appeals may not endure if the use of threat appeals are generalised and call for further research regarding their long-term potential.

Dooley *et al.*'s (2010) research highlights the need to consider possible unintended effects caused by obesity-prevention public service announcements (PSAs). Their investigation concerned three types of PSAs: *body-image* (suggestion of an ideal body shape), *health benefit* (portraying health benefits associated with physical activity/healthy eating) and *positive experience* (portrayal of the fun aspects of physical activity/healthy eating). The results from their experiment with Canadian adolescents (aged 14-17) indicate that *body-image PSAs* may stimulate anxiety, suggesting that advertisements of this kind may elicit eating disorders. Contrary to predictions, *positive experience PSAs* did not receive more positive evaluations or more change intentions compared to *health benefit PSAs*. *Health benefit PSAs* were found to be more effective at encouraging behaviour intention relating to healthy eating, something the researchers explain by the presence of health statistics with immediate relevance and strong visuals in the advertisements. Given the age of the respondents and the context of *health-promoting PSAs*, it would appear that in this instance an emphasis on the central route to persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) was considered the most effective.

A content analysis of South Korean television food advertisements communicating health with children found *health/well-being* and *nutrition content* to be commonly used appeals (Moon, 2010). Moon (2010) argues, however, that whilst television advertising for healthy foods tends to emphasise health, such claims could make better use of health information. For instance, food advertising targeting children tends to use emotional appeals that do not communicate pertinent product information.

3.12 The Change4Life campaign

In terms of current healthy eating campaigns employing television advertising, Change4Life is a public health campaign delivered by Public Health England, an executive agency of the Department of Health in the UK. Launched in 2009, Change4Life is described as a “flagship programme” for preventing childhood obesity (PHE, 2014b, p. 31). When introduced, it was the first and most ambitious national campaign on this issue in the world (Hardy and Asscher, 2011). The programme aims to inspire and facilitate a social movement for the long-term adoption of healthier lifestyles, “making it easier for families to eat well and move more” (PHE, 2014b, p. 31). Its target audience is families with children aged 5-11 and adults aged 35+ (Marketing Society UK, 2010) and although this thesis deals with older children, the creative ideas underpinning the campaign are of interest.

Research informing the campaign had demonstrated that authoritarian messages were counter-productive. As a consequence, any blame was removed from parents and modern life was identified as the common enemy. The solution was identified as one of shared responsibility, providing a little *nudge* (Thaler and Sunstein, 2008) to tackle the problem. A distinctive verbal and visual vocabulary was devised. The tone of the naïve, colourful, graphic and child-like language was to appeal equally to parents and children. The word *obesity* was banned from the Change4Life vocabulary, where ‘4Life’ implies a “promise in perpetuity and a long healthy life” (M&C Saatchi, 2009). Public Health England is in the process of developing more precise measures for gauging the impact of the campaign, but claim that Change4Life has “developed unprecedented early indications of behavioural impact” (PHE, 2014b, p. 87). Chapter 5 delivers a discourse analysis of the Change4Life ‘Be Food Smart’ advertisement.

3.13 Summary

This chapter has reviewed key concepts of social marketing, which provides the underpinning principles of encouraging behaviour change. Accordingly, social marketing interventions need to have the consumer/client as their starting point. Initiatives should be characterised by relational thinking, recognising that behaviour change may need long-term effort to achieve and maintain. Bandura’s (2004) model of SCT, which describes how behaviour change may be realised, has been reviewed. The model assumes behaviour change to be contingent upon self-efficacy; an individual’s belief that they are able to change their behaviour. Aspects of persuasion/communications have also been addressed. Accordingly, Petty and Cacioppo’s (1986) model of persuasion and attitude change – the ELM – was explored, as were two

commonly used advertising appeals within social marketing – threat appeals and incentive appeals.

The literature describes adolescents as *reflective consumers*. As such, they are increasingly sophisticated and able to think reflectively about marketplace phenomena. However, they are still in the process of developing their scepticism of advertising and appreciation of advertising tactics, remaining vulnerable to persuasive advertising for tempting foods with potential long-term negative health effects. Although reasonably *health literate*, adolescents do not necessarily translate their knowledge into healthy eating behaviour.

The literature review established that compared to younger children, adolescents have attracted research attention only comparatively recently. It follows that further insight applicable to the food advertising context and adolescent consumers regarding consumer socialisation, advertising scepticism and persuasion knowledge is needed. What is more, many studies in the literature report on research conducted within one country, when a cross-national, qualitative perspective dealing with such key concepts as consumer socialisation is highly applicable in the context of what in chapter 2 (see 2.4.1) was deemed to be a global childhood obesity epidemic (WHO, 2000). On this basis, the thesis has opted to conduct research with adolescents in England and Sweden, two countries that demonstrate differences in legislation regarding advertising to children (see 3.6.2 and 3.8.2), differences in attitudes to childhood (see 2.7.2) and different levels of childhood overweight/obesity (see 2.7.1). On a specific level, no literature has been found that sheds light on how Sweden's television advertising ban for children younger than 12 may have affected their consumer socialisation by the time they are 12. Accordingly, the thesis will seek to fulfil two objectives associated with adolescents as consumers:

Objective 1: From the perspective of 12-14-year-old English and Swedish adolescents, investigate how they perceive themselves as consumers.

This objective represents the prime directive of a *client orientation* within social marketing (Hastings and Domegan, 2014) and recognition of the fact that successful behaviour change (adoption of healthy eating) follows from a well-grounded understanding of the target audience. The crucial aspect of this objective is the viewpoint of the adolescents themselves, in recognition of the quest of the thesis to conduct the research from the perspective of the participants.

Objective 2: Identify and characterise the dominant discourses in relation to food advertising/healthy eating among adolescents aged 12-14 in England and Sweden.

Analysis of these discourses is envisaged to result in improved understanding of a number of concepts reviewed within this chapter. Consequently, the fieldwork will investigate adolescents' perception of (un)healthy eating and potential competition to their adoption of a healthy diet. Further, the study will explore aspects of consumer socialisation, such as adolescents' perceived influence of socialisation agents, degree of scepticism demonstrated towards food advertising and level of advertising literacy. Figure 3.9 indicates key points of knowledge regarding adolescent consumers (blue pieces). The grey jigsaw piece signposts that knowledge within the area of healthy eating and food advertising still represents a "grey area" that will benefit from further research attention.

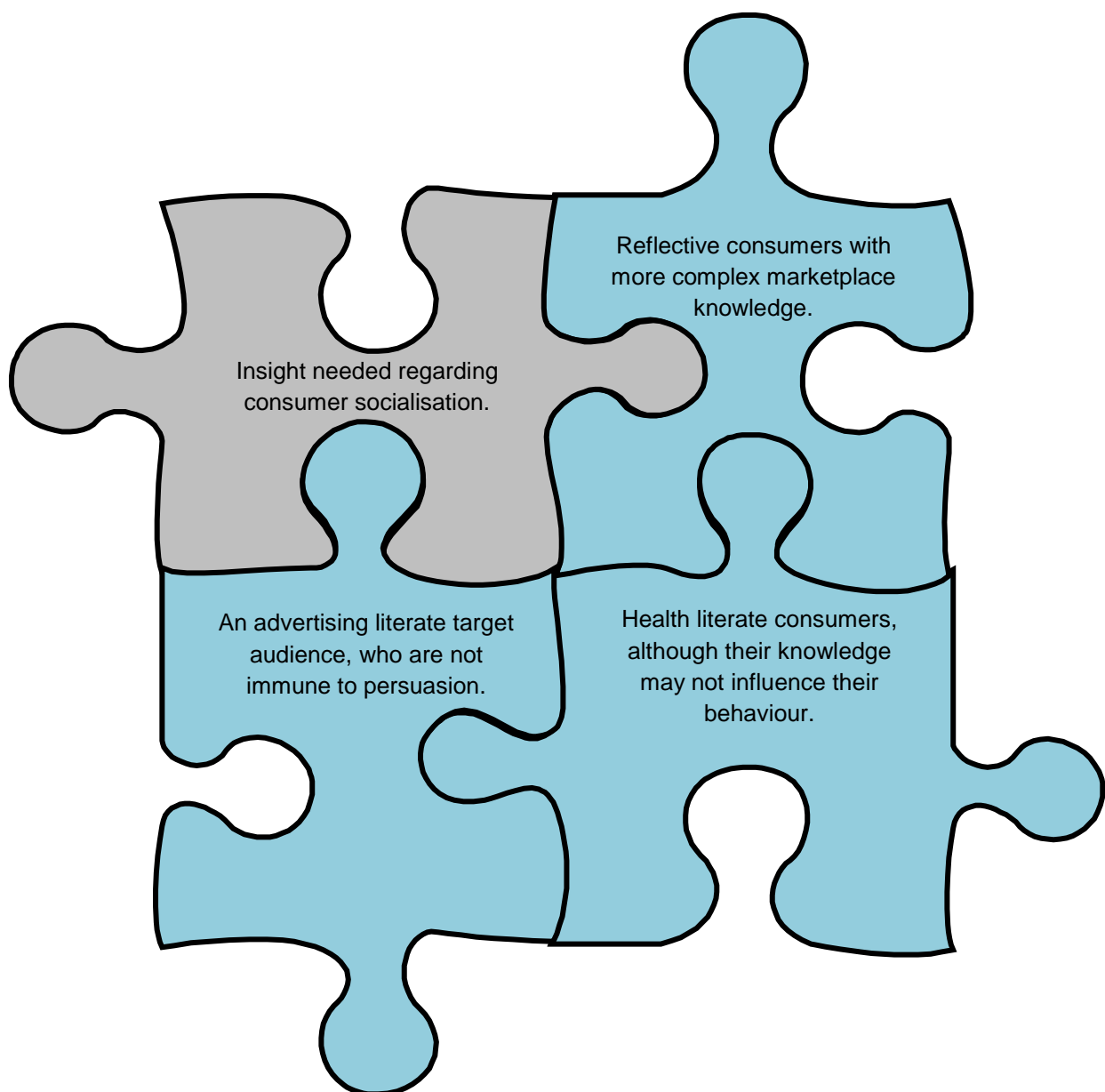


Figure 3.9: Key areas of current knowledge regarding adolescent consumers (Sherrington, 2016).

Television food advertising is extensive and *dominated by HFSS foods*. Studies have identified the use of *unjustified health claims*, even in HFSS advertising. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that television food advertising affects children's *food preferences, purchase behaviour and consumption*. Research insight specific to adolescents is limited, but studies demonstrate that advertising may influence not only their consumption of the advertised brands, but also their more generic consumption of energy-dense food, indicating that food advertising may contribute to adolescent obesity.

In light of the above evidence and the global obesity epidemic (see 2.4.1), a re-orientation of food advertising research has been called for, where the aim is to assist implementation of public policy (Cairns *et al.*, 2013), for instance, the WHO *Recommendations on the Marketing of Foods and Drinks to Children* (WHO, 2010). The research domain of advertising of healthy eating/healthy foods represents a new research area (Moon, 2010; Boyland *et al.*, 2012; Cairns *et al.*, 2013). To date, the literature provides limited evidence regarding its effects on children, although the studies reviewed here suggest positive influences. Equally, few studies report what creative strategies would lend themselves to promoting a healthy diet to children. In this context and commensurate with the *creative orientation* of social marketing, where *client insight* (see objective 1) needs to be complemented with essential, motivating elements of imagination and innovation (Hastings and Domegan, 2014), the thesis will seek to fulfil the following objective:

Objective 3: Ascertain what message formats and advertising appeals are appropriate to use in messages promoting healthy eating/foods to young adolescents. This will partly be based on creative contribution provided by the participants themselves.

What is more, in recognition of the fact that there are few studies in the literature that provide a qualitative, in-depth analysis of the creative strategies employed within television food advertisements, the thesis will seek to fulfil an additional objective:

Objective 4: Deliver qualitative insight into discourses employed within a small set of current television advertisements promoting healthy eating/living.

This objective responds to Prell *et al.*'s (2011) contention that it is important to draw attention to discursive structures of food in advertising, as these represent constructions of food that children (and their parents) are exposed to. The thesis deals with two discursive contexts – the UK and Sweden – and so, two English and one Swedish advertisement will be used in order to allow for a qualitative, cross-national comparison of advertising discourses. It is envisaged that the analysis will illuminate yet another aspect of social marketing, namely that of a *competitive orientation* (Hastings and Domegan,

2014). What is more, it is thought that the analysis may identify aspects of advertising discourse that interfere with the adoption of a healthy diet. Recognising the lack of attention paid to the visual aspects of advertising within the research domain, both objectives will explore the visual elements of the advertisements.

Figure 3.10 depicts some key characteristics and points of knowledge associated with the research domain of adolescents and television advertising (blue pieces). The grey jigsaw pieces signpost “grey areas” that will benefit from further research attention.

The design of the fieldwork conducted to address these research objectives is the topic of the next chapter.

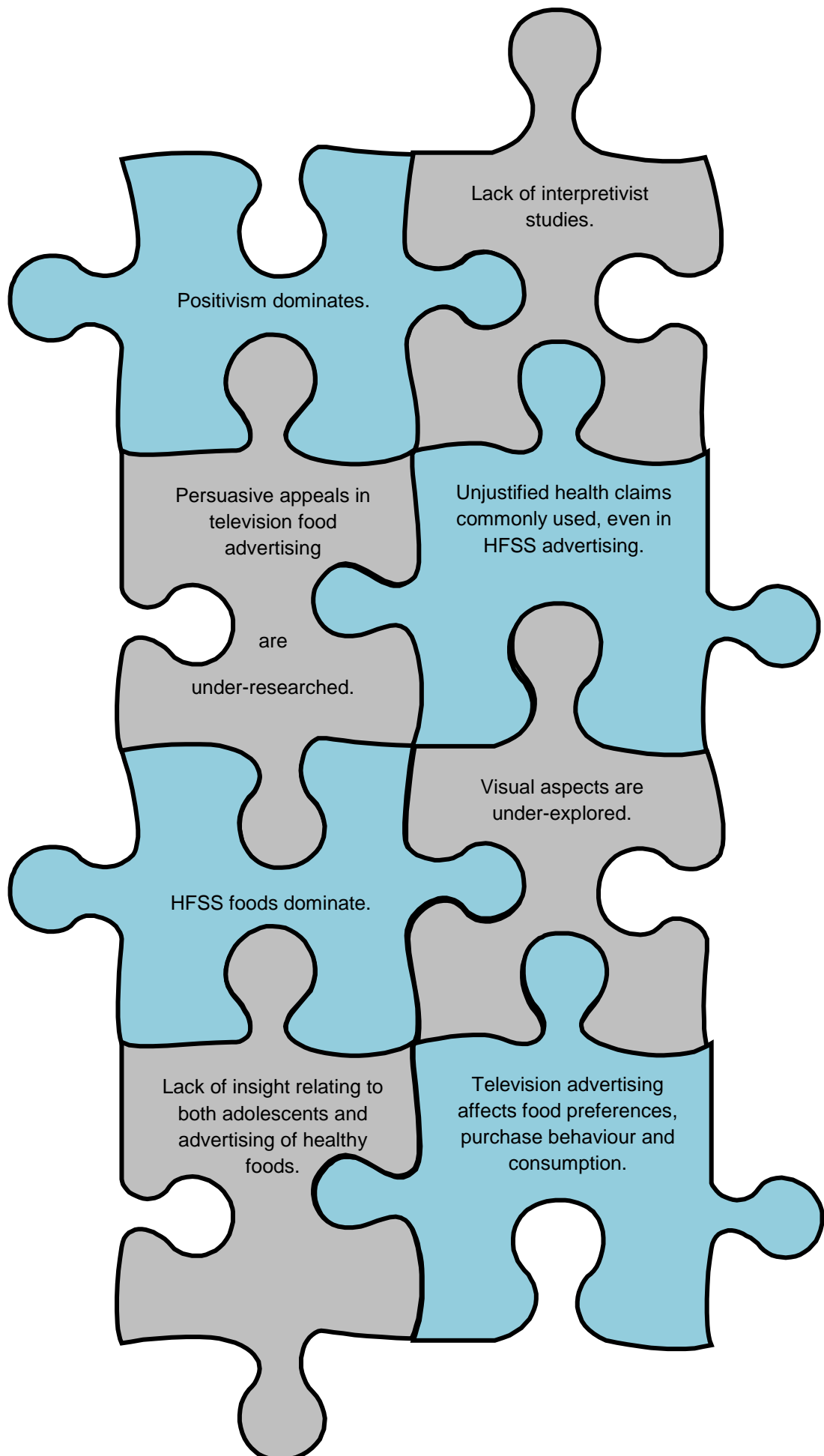


Figure 3.10: Key areas of current knowledge associated with television food advertising and adolescents

Chapter 4 Research methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the ontological orientation of the thesis, accounting for its interpretivist perspective and placing it within the remit of social constructionism. Further, the chapter addresses the role fulfilled by the research participants during the research process. The specific research techniques employed are outlined. A justification for the approaches to data analysis is then provided. What is more, appropriate evaluative criteria are considered. The final section provides a reflexive account outlining the researcher's pre-understanding of the research topic. Insight is also offered into motivations associated with the choice of thesis topic over and above its position as a current issue of social and economic importance.

4.2 Application of an interpretivist perspective

The thesis uses an interpretivist perspective. This responds to a gap identified in the review of the literature associated with television advertising. Much of the literature reporting on the extent and content of food advertising, including the creative strategies used, is presented as quantitative content analyses. Further, the use of experiments in order to test the effect of food advertisements and surveys to investigate beliefs and attitudes is commonplace. Whilst positivist research has produced insight regarding the extent, nature and effect of food advertising, the purpose of this thesis is different in that it seeks a qualitative, in-depth understanding of adolescent consumers and their discourses around food advertising. Chan *et al.* (2009b) maintain that perceptions of healthy eating are specific to the *context* and *age group* of the research participants, making an interpretivist approach with a focus upon understanding and interpretation appropriate. What is more, social marketers put a premium on qualitative research to inform decision-making (Hastings and Domegan, 2014).

Hackley (2001, p. 49) refers to the "interpretive turn" as a strain of marketing research, which is "quirky, individualistic and intellectually liberal". Its emphasis lies upon "lived experiences of consumers in engagement with social practices of consumption", explored using qualitative research designs. The "interpretive turn" has largely been resisted by academic marketing communications research (Hackley, 2001). According to Silverman (2006), the main strength of qualitative research lies in its ability to investigate phenomena that are simply unavailable elsewhere. Consequently, qualitative research methods can offer a deeper

understanding of social phenomena. Hackley (2001) argues that qualitative research promotes marketing scholarship that is critical, sophisticated and culturally informed, offering the richest opportunity for social scientific investigation in marketing. Approaching marketing research from the “cultural approach”, Moisander and Valtonen (2006, p. 2) express similar ontological beliefs and their perspective informed the research design decisions.

The above discussion is summarised in figure 4.1. By the application of an interpretivist perspective to analysing consumers’ lived experiences within a social consumption context, the researcher sought to develop deeper-level, qualitative insight of the phenomena being investigated.

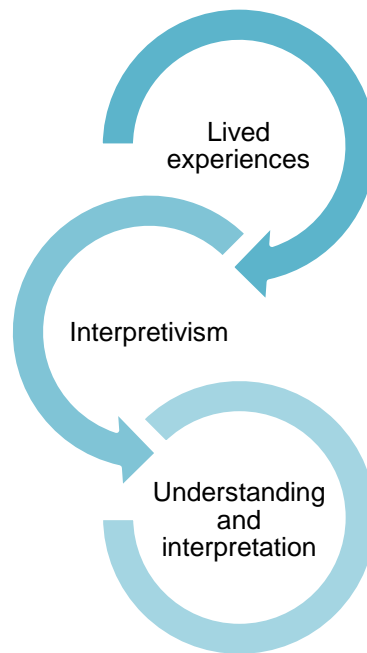


Figure 4.1: Application of an interpretivist perspective to the study of adolescents and food advertising (Sherrington, 2016).

4.3 Key aspects of social constructionism

The empirical research design was influenced by Hackley’s (1998; 2001) ideas on social constructionism. Defining the social constructionist perspective within marketing, Hackley (2001, p. 2) contrasts it with “mainstream traditions of marketing writing”. “Mainstream marketing” refers to “a realm of marketing practice which lies in some place beyond the text”. As such, mainstream marketing tends to promote a scientific research approach concerned with establishing statistical support for empirical truths. An ontology of social constructionism, on the other hand, seeks to reveal the

same realm as a “complex literary construction” where language plays a central role, as described below.

Particular aspects of Hackley’s (1998; 2001) interpretation of social constructionism are of relevance to this thesis. Firstly, Hackley (1998) maintains that *meaning* is a social construction, as opposed to something constructed on a private, cognitive level. Secondly, our sense of meaning and reality is discursively constructed through *language*. Mainstream marketing perceives language as a clear window to reality and privileges realist, neutral vocabulary over the “constitutive language of the everyday” (p. 21). Social constructionism as outlined by Hackley (2001) sees language as a “constitutive force” (p. 31) in the construction of consumption and consumers. Moisander and Valtonen (2006) similarly maintain that meaning is constructed discursively in social interaction using text, talk, sounds, images and signifying practices.

The third aspect of importance relates to the *portrayal of consumers*. Hackley (2001, p. 18) maintains that mainstream marketing tends to rely on implicit and vague models of consumers, where consumers remain as “cardboard cut-outs” within overtly deterministic models of consumer behaviour. The consumer as seen from the social constructionist perspective remains an autonomous individual, but one whose development of individuality and subjectivity as well as behaviour (thought, feeling and action) depends on social interaction. This standpoint coincides with the agentic perspective of social cognitive theory, where people are seen as producers, as well as products, of social systems (Bandura, 2001; 2009). Rather than seeing consumers as socially isolated rational processors of information, the hermeneutic epistemological model sees consumers as self-directed entities, who actively seek meaning through symbolic engagement with the world (Hackley, 2003). Within this realm, Hackley (2001, p. 50) proposes the term “discursive marketing” to describe a “bottom-up theory building emphasis of consumer-focused research”. Similarly, O’Donohoe and Tynan (1997) refer to advertising audiences as active, sophisticated and socially situated individuals and so criticise the heavy reliance by empirical advertising research on laboratory experiments.

The fourth aspect concerns the *objects of empirical analysis*. Moisander and Valtonen (2006) outline that within cultural marketing and consumer research, analysis is conducted on textual and visual materials, or “cultural texts” (p. 68). Cultural texts are sites where cultural meanings and forms are accessible to the researcher. Visual images are important elements of consumer culture, used for the construction of social reality. Figure 4.2 depicts the main components involved in the construction of meaning within the social constructionist perspective.

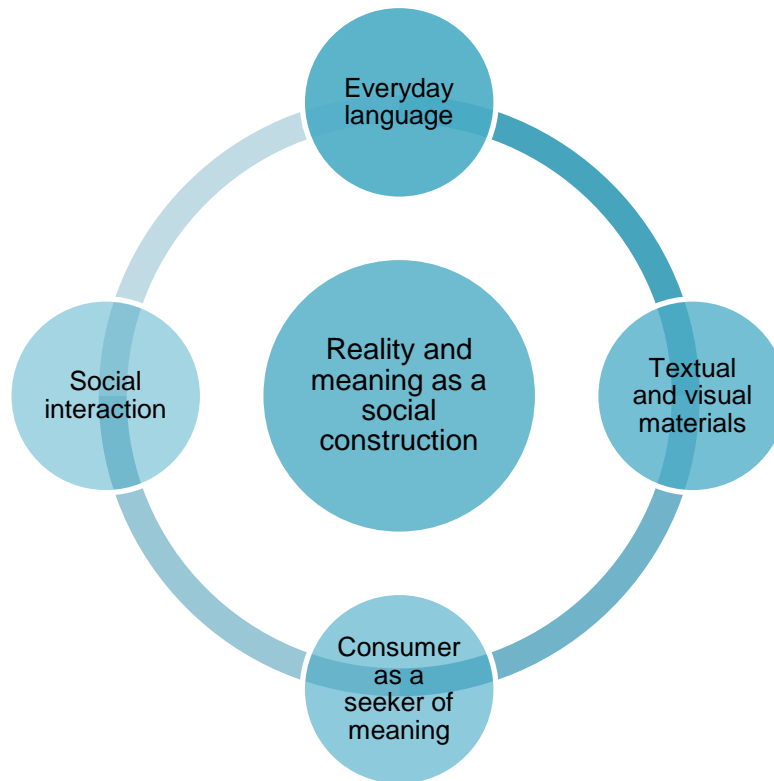


Figure 4.2: Overview of the ontological assumptions of social constructionism (Sherrington, 2016).

4.3.1 A social constructionist perspective on the distributed self

The second research stage concerned the participants' perception of themselves and involved the construction of audience profiles through collage construction. The design and analysis of this part was influenced by Wetherell and Maybin's (1996) argument that the *self* is *socially constructed*. This view argues for a merged view of the person and their social context "where the boundaries of one cannot be easily separated from the boundaries of the other" (p. 222). It follows that the self is continually shaped and re-shaped through interactions with others within a social world constructed by such aspects as current social practices, social structures and divisions, as well as everyday conversations. As people move across different sites – for instance, from home to school – they find themselves in different social contexts with different identity possibilities. To recognise people's various involvements in social life, the self may be best described as *distributed*, continually spreading and changing across a relational and social field. As such, the self is *contextual* as well as *emergent*, due to its fluid and continuously changing format. Wetherell and Maybin claim that language, talk and discourse provide important raw materials for the construction of the self and that our identities are, in part, discursive

products. In the course of its use, language constructs the world and the self. Meaning is a joint accomplishment and the self a product of collaborative, provisional and contextual negotiation.

4.4 A construction yard of knowledge

Within social constructionist epistemology, Hackley (2001, p. 57-58) refers to the “construction yard” of conceiving knowledge, where knowledge is seen as assembled and maintained for a purpose. Whilst the nature of *knowledge* is less mysterious as the buildings are available for inspection, the nature of *understanding* is difficult. This follows from a need for understanding how buildings in the yard were constructed brick by brick and for what purpose. Using this epistemological metaphor, he explains that questions of “what can we know?” (epistemology) take on “a less concrete, more qualified and more context-dependent character when applied to a constructed social world”. Hammersley (2014) defines *epistemology* as being concerned with the “nature of knowledge” or “how to gain knowledge” (p. 169).

Berger and Luckmann (1967, p. 15) explain that the “sociology of knowledge” is concerned with the social construction of reality. As such, the sociology of knowledge concerns itself with what people “know as reality” in everyday life. Introducing the concept of “social relativity”, they contend that reality and knowledge differ between societies. In their view, this knowledge constitutes the “fabric of meaning” (p. 27) in the absence of which no society could exist. This type of research is primarily interpretivist and seeks insight into the ways in which social actors construct a sense of reality (Hackley, 2001). According to Berger and Luckmann (1967), the most important vehicles of reality-maintenance are those of language and conversation. Similarly, de la Ville and Tartas (2010) maintain that a more comprehensive understanding of children’s consumption activities follows from a focus on their everyday language.

The epistemology of this thesis has been influenced by the idea of a construction yard of knowledge. Extensive consideration was given to appropriate tools with which to equip the research participants in their role as constructors of meaning. Careful consultation of the literature associated with conducting research with children was required and this is the topic of the next section.

4.5 Children as research participants

Social constructionist ontology frames research from the perspective of those who experience marketing rather than from the viewpoint of the researcher

(Hackley, 2001). Conducting the research from the viewpoint of the participants corresponds with the social marketing perspective of this thesis. Hastings and Domegan (2014) maintain that a *client orientation* – seeing the world as our clients see it and value it – represents a starting point for good social marketing. Within the literature on food advertising, there have been calls for research to begin from adolescents' viewpoint (Sherry *et al.*, 1999; Preston, 2000). More to the point, as stakeholders in the childhood obesity challenge, children's views are of direct relevance to policymakers, food producers and advertisers (Mehta *et al.*, 2010). The empirical research carried out for this thesis strived towards conducting the fieldwork from the participants' perspective (Mick and Buhl, 1992). The following sections provide the theoretical underpinning for this perspective.

4.5.1 Children as social actors within the study context

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC) changed the status of children through drawing up a set of fundamental rights, among them the right to high standards of research about their lives with due consideration to be given to their views (UNICEF, 1989). Sparrman (2009, p. 299) recognises contrasting views in consumer research of children as 'naïve' versus 'competent'. Theories of the innocent/naïve child requiring protection are associated with developmental psychology and developmental stages (Roedder John, 1999). The notion of the competent child is based on a socially and culturally constructed child, who is an agentive social citizen (Prout and James, 1997; James *et al.*, 1998; Christensen and Prout, 2005). The research participants were aged 12-14 and in the *reflective stage* (ages 11-16) of consumer socialisation, characterised by more sophisticated, reflective thinking and reasoning about consumer decisions (Roedder John, 1999). Using Davis' (2010, p. 62) phraseology, the way of "seeing children" within this thesis is best described as "the child as a social actor within the study context".

4.5.2 Children as co-creators of knowledge

Christensen and Prout (2005, p. 48) recognise that since the early 1990s, the social study of children has seen a fundamental change of perspective, what they term the *new sociology of childhood* (also see Prout and James, 1997). Essentially, children have acquired conceptual autonomy, perceived as the direct and primary unit of study. James *et al.* (1998) introduced the concept of the *Social Child*. According to this model, in their roles as social actors in their own lives children make meaning through interacting with other children and adults. Underpinning this reconstruction of childhood was the key

theoretical move of social constructionism. Rather than viewing childhood as a natural/biological phenomenon, it was appreciated as a product of history, society and culture (Christensen and Prout, 2005). Kellett (2010) maintains that the UNCRC (UNICEF, 1989) assisted this shift in research focus away from children's cognition and behaviour towards an interest in their lived experience. For Bucknall (2014), the recognition of children's rights and their acquired social status coupled with concerns about power and control regarding how research accesses their perspectives, has led to a greater emphasis on attending to children's voices. A quarter of a century after the introduction of the UNCRC (UNICEF, 1989), the *State of the World's Children* report (UNICEF, 2014) calls for innovation in order to address problems affecting children and recognises how the best and brightest solutions often emerge from young people themselves. Accordingly, taking the perspective of the adolescents, this thesis sought their input in terms of how to promote healthy eating to them.

Explicit consideration needs to be given to the notions of *competence* and *power* (Westcott and Littleton, 2005). The Social Child not only enjoys a set of rights, but has agency too. Children's competencies are accepted as different, rather than inferior (James *et al.*, 1998). Kellett (2014) argues that the influence of human rights has led to a transfer of power manifest in research epistemology. Children are gaining the status of "co-creators of knowledge" (p. 24), a position invested with power. In the subculture of childhood, children enjoy an insider perspective denied to adults, invested with a degree of power (Kellett, 2010).

Gaining young people's consent to participate in research is viewed as a critical stage in a research project (Hill, 2005; Heath *et al.*, 2009; Alderson, 2014). Such consent should be informed, meaning that participants should be fully briefed about the nature of the research project as well as how the output may be used. The very process of gaining informed consent recognises children's agency, both in terms of their competency to engage with research methods and their ability to decide whether to participate (Heath *et al.*, 2009).

4.5.3 A participatory approach to doing research with children

Given their recognition as competent social agents, research *with* children (rather than *on*) is increasingly common. The view of children as participating research subjects (and the epistemological assumptions of a social constructionist perspective) prompts researchers to view the fieldwork event as a co-constructive process of meaning-making (Heath *et al.*, 2009;

Bucknall, 2014; Fraser *et al.*, 2014). *Participatory research* rather than data gathering, helps knowledge production (Kellett, 2010).

The above discussion summarises key arguments in the literature of relevance to the thesis. Figure 4.3 synthesises these points in terms of the role and status of the research participants. The following section outlines the empirical research design.

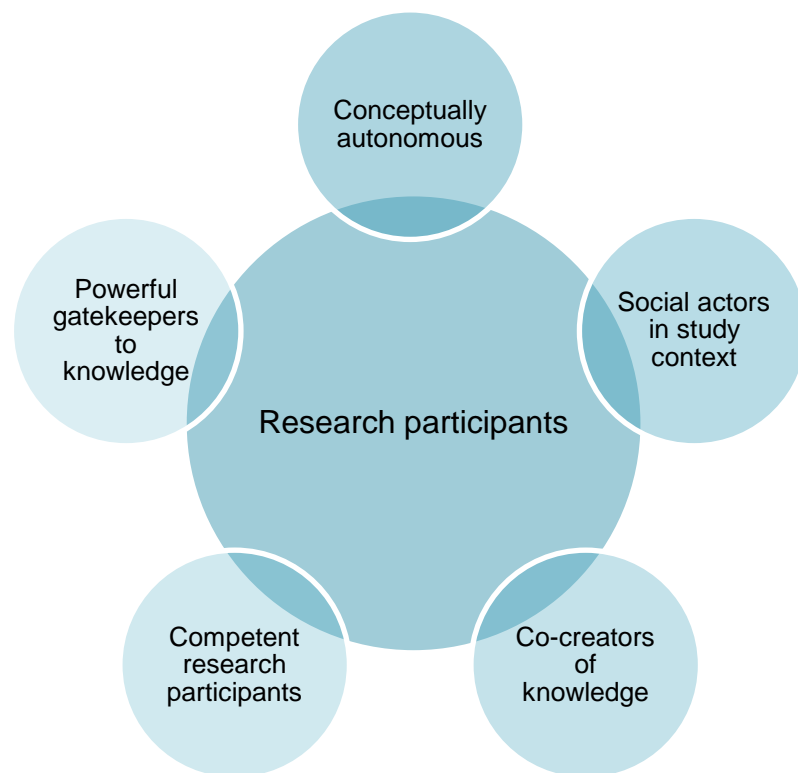


Figure 4.3: Role and status of the research participants in the research process (Sherrington, 2016).

4.6 The research design

O'Donohoe and Tynan (1998) recognise that a perspective of consumers as active and socially and culturally situated requires research methods that are localised, sensitive and flexible. Hackley (2001) calls for research techniques that are varied and creative, what Banister and Booth (2005, p. 157) term a “child-centric” approach to research within marketing. Similarly, Bartholomew and O'Donohue (2005) champion the use of a “child's eye view” (p. 441) in research with children and advertising. The methodological approach adopted Hackley's (2003) ontological assumption that advertising can be

seen in a socially constructed light. Further, it sought to embrace the participants' active participation in an array of research techniques.

A high-school in the southwest of Sweden and a high-school in the northwest of England were recruited to take part in the study. Schools as research sites may attract criticism associated with potential existence of power relationships created by teachers' authority over children, accompanied by a potential perceived suggestion of correct and incorrect answers. However, Banister and Booth (2005) recognise that the majority of studies involving children recruit through schools, reflecting ease of access and the need to satisfy ethical concerns. Importantly, this type of research enables insight into the participants' behaviour in a social environment (Banister and Booth, 2005); an environment where children co-create meaning regarding food and drink.

All research in Sweden was conducted in Swedish. The participants presented some of their collage and advertisement output in English, most likely in recognition of the fact that the study was located at an English university and that English adolescents participated in the study.

For reasons accounted for in the following section, it was decided to take a longitudinal perspective to the fieldwork.

4.6.1 Adoption of a longitudinal perspective

Many studies on advertising to young consumers are cross-sectional with an accompanying short-term perspective, providing a "snapshot" at a point in time (Bridges and Briesch, 2006; Saunders *et al.*, 2016, p. 201). The study adopted a longitudinal perspective in that the researcher met with the same participants at three points during the period of August 2012 to June 2015. The study was akin to a *series of snapshots* over a given time-frame, providing the opportunity to study change and development (Saunders *et al.*, 2016).


There were particular reasons for the longitudinal perspective. First and foremost, the aim and objectives of this thesis were ambitious – addressing all within one fieldwork session would have been unachievable. Importantly, the participants were aged 12 at the first research event, 13 at the second and 14 at the final event. Although not the direct focus of the thesis, the longitudinal perspective allowed the gaining of insight into the participants' consumer development over the span of the three research stages. The researcher had not previously worked with young adolescents. Consequently, the first research stage provided experience and confidence in working with the age group. Importantly, the longer-term perspective

meant that the study could evolve over time with the possibility of adaptations to changing circumstances. What is more, the researcher could deepen her understanding of the research topic through extensive scholarly activity over time.

All study stages were conducted at the same two schools. This allowed the participants to establish trust in the researcher, which was further facilitated by the three research stages and the associated fact that trust tends to develop over time (Greene and Hill, 2005). Whereas some participants chose not to participate in subsequent stages and others joined beyond the first stage (see table 4.10), the core of the cohort (Heath *et al.*, 2009) remained the same. Trust also developed between school management and the researcher, which was essential to allow for the making of practical research arrangements, but also in recognition of the challenges associated with gaining access to conduct research with children (Hill, 2005; Heath *et al.*, 2009).

There were about 12 months between each fieldwork event, which meant that the children's ability to perform their role as research participants was likely to develop from one event to the next (Hill, 2005). Guided by the need to select methods suited to children's diverse competencies (Banister and Booth, 2005; Greene and Hill, 2005), the researcher adopted gradually more challenging research techniques. Interpretivist research tends to use multiple methods to understand how children experience consumption (Davis, 2010), which was also necessitated by different research objectives guiding each stage. Brief, varied activities in stage 1 accommodated for brief attention spans and simply required participants to talk in response to straightforward stimuli. Collage construction in stage 2 required teams to build collages in response to set questions and to present their collages briefly. Advertisement evaluation in stage 3 allowed comparisons with the discussions in stage 1, paving the way for a more challenging task of advertisement design. Here, they were required to design a creative concept, which involved writing advertising copy and, in some cases, directing a simple film. Common to all stages was the group context and the opportunity for the participants to express themselves in creative as well as vocal means (Banister and Booth, 2005). Importantly, the longitudinal design was commensurate with a key principle of social marketing identified in the literature review, namely, the need to develop client understanding (Hastings and Domegan, 2014), which may be enhanced through contact over time (Hastings and Haywood, 1991). Investigating social norms in adolescent healthy eating, Pedersen *et al.* (2015) recognise that the cultural context and changes over time are important aspects of socialisation processes, calling for future research to include both cross-cultural and longitudinal studies.

There are, however, challenges associated with longitudinal research. Accordingly, the recruitment process was more challenging with the schools having to commit to research taking place over a three-year period. Ongoing relationship maintenance was needed to ensure co-operation of the schools. Parental and participant consent had to be sought for each event. Some attrition followed from voluntary participation and a small number of participants deciding not to take part in subsequent stages (see table 4.10). This was not considered problematic, as new participants could be recruited from the same groups of adolescents, but it did result in more demands on fieldwork management. Overall, the study required substantial time and financial investment. The advantages and challenges of a longitudinal approach as perceived from this study are summarised in table 4.1.



<p>Suitable for studies with ambitious objectives.</p> <p>With children, allows the adoption of gradually more challenging research methods.</p> <p>Allows the observation of children's development over time.</p> <p>Makes the research process more flexible, with the possibility to make adaptations.</p> <p>Allows the researcher to develop their insight over time, leading to more informed fieldwork.</p>	<p>Recruitment of research participants more challenging due to longer-term commitment.</p> <p>Parental and participant consent to be re-obtained for each event.</p> <p>Relationship management required to maintain participation.</p> <p>Adaptations may require further applications for ethics consent.</p> <p>Attrition likely, with strategy of participant replacement needed.</p> <p>Demands higher investment in terms of time and finance.</p>
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Table 4.1: Advantages and challenges associated with longitudinal research (Sherrington, 2016).

At this point, a reflection around the practical research arrangements is valuable. The research site-researcher relationship was different in both countries. Accordingly, the situation in England was strict and formal, with all contact through two deputy head teachers. New *Disclosure and Barring Service* (DBS) clearance was required for each stage. The researcher was escorted on and off the premises at each visit. In Sweden, the first point of contact was a telephone conversation with one of the head teachers, in order to follow up on a letter about the study. The Swedish research site was characterised by open access, with the researcher advised to make her own way directly to the head teachers' offices. There was no requirement for DBS

clearance (however, the researcher made the DBS certificates available) and for the second and third stages of the study, formal consent was obtained on the insistence of the researcher. This was slightly uncomfortable, as the researcher felt that she inconvenienced the school by creating extra work that she was unable to assist with. However, the Ethics Committee at the University of Liverpool insisted approval was sought ahead of each event.

The following three sections explain the research design of each stage (see figure 4.4). Each stage was granted ethics consent by the University of Liverpool Ethics Committee.

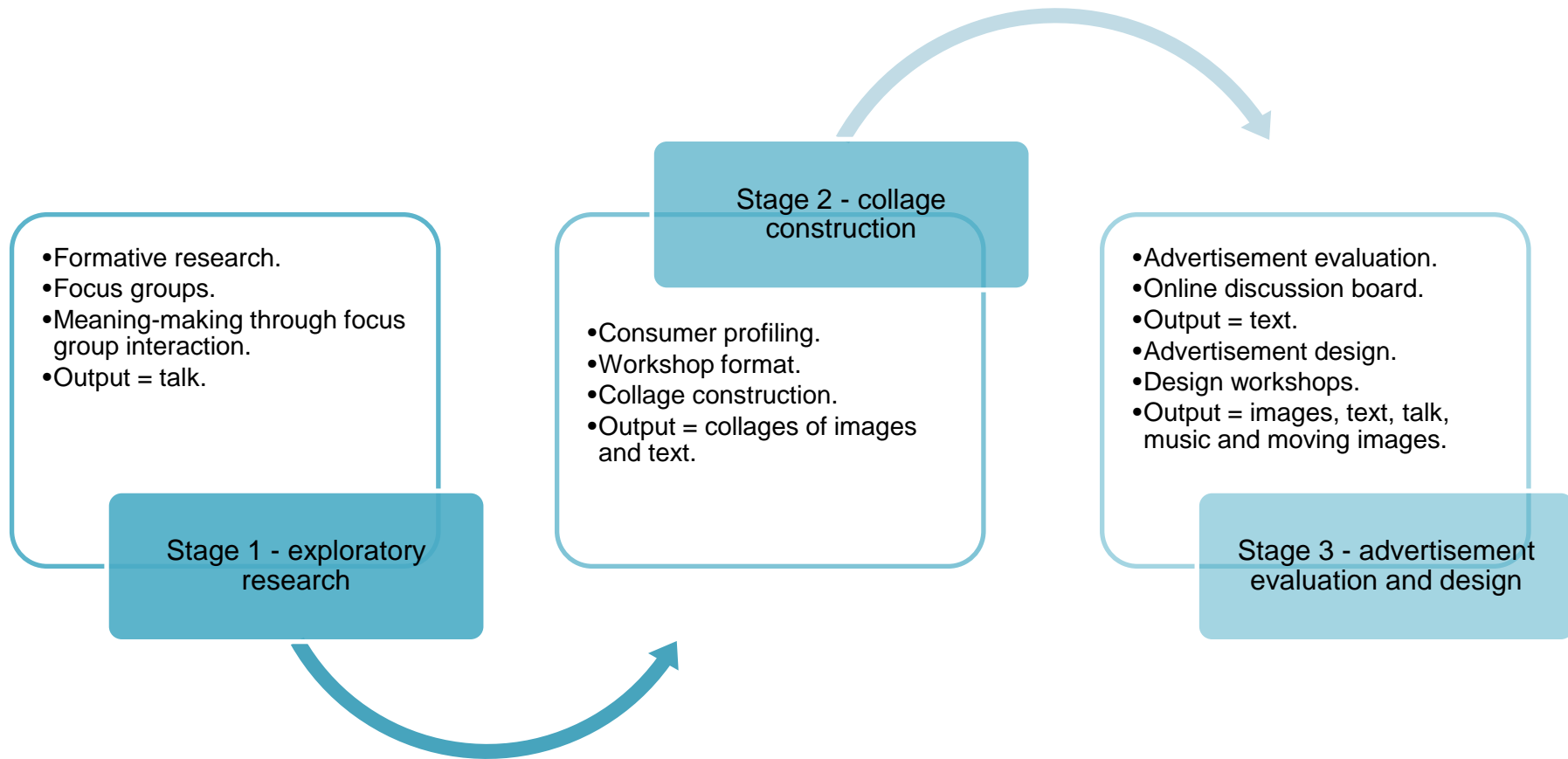


Figure 4.4: The three stages of the empirical research (Sherrington, 2016).

4.6.2 Stage 1 – the exploratory research

This stage aimed to explore the participants' understanding and perceived importance of the concept of healthy eating. The extent to which they engage in their own food purchases and their level of influence upon household food purchases was also of interest, as was their perceived influence of socialisation agents upon their food choice. Further, insight regarding their perception of food advertising in various media was collected. This stage was regarded as *formative*, influencing the direction of the following stages.

Parents received an information leaflet about the study and gave their permission for their child to participate by signing a consent form. A simplified information leaflet was provided to the children, who opted into participation by signing a separate consent form. Only children with their parents' consent and who had given their own agreement were invited to take part. It was explained that it was a three-year study. However, recognising the importance of "ongoing consent", consent was re-negotiated for stages 2 and 3 (Kellett, 2010, p. 25). This was also necessary as there was a small number of new participants in these stages, who replaced participants who declined the invitation to contribute to these stages (see table 4.10). For stage 1, all the participants were aged 12 and British or Swedish. The focus groups in Sweden took place in August 2012 and those in England in June 2013. The focus groups were conducted in ordinary class-rooms and were audio recorded. The research with the Swedish participants was conducted in Swedish.

Guided by the perspective of social constructionism where the social context is of importance to meaning-making, as well as the aim to explore potential peer group influences, a group context was established as appropriate for all research stages. This approach was also supported by the social marketing principles underpinning the study, which call for a shift away from individually-focused interventions to thinking in terms of groups and systems effects (Donovan and Henley, 2010). Pettersson and Fjellström (2006) maintain that the understanding of food in everyday life and the use of food in social interaction represent culturally specific forms of knowledge (also see Johansson *et al.*, 2009). Shifting the focus from the *solitary* to the *social viewer*, Ritson and Elliott (1999) emphasise the importance of the social context in the consumption of advertising. Hence, it was decided that focus groups would be used, as the methodological assumption of focus groups is that social and cultural knowledge is produced in interaction with others (Smithson, 2000; Tonkiss, 2004). Similarly, Calder (1977) describes participant interaction as a major virtue of the technique. Puchta and Potter (2004, p. 126) describe a focus group as a "collecting tank" for discourses of relevance to the research topic, whereas Hennessy and Heary (2005) recognise that a group context allows for a richer account of the research

topic than would be generated from one-to-one interviews. Lunt and Livingstone (1996) maintain that the focus group emphasises the social nature of communication, which is in tune with an increasing concern with social processes of communication in studies dealing with media audiences (also see Mick and Buhl, 1992; Ritson and Elliott, 1995; 1999).

The focus groups were seen as a simulation of routine communicative contexts that allow discovery of the processes by which meaning is socially constructed through everyday talk (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996). Focus groups provide for different power dynamics compared to individual interviews (Smithson, 2000; Hennessy and Heary, 2005), presenting another compelling reason for their use, as it was regarded as one way of addressing any power imbalance between the researcher and the participants. Smithson maintains that the group can be collectively powerful in that they possess shared knowledge that the moderator does not have access to. Table 4.2 summarises reasons for using focus groups in the study.

Table 4.2: Reasons for the use of focus groups (Sherrington, 2016).

- *Accommodates research in a social context.*
- *Facilitates interaction generating rich data.*
- *Allows for a variety of discourses to emerge.*
- *Addresses any perceived power imbalance between the researcher and research participants, by allowing the latter to be collectively powerful.*
- *Allows exploration of possible peer group influences.*

Oates (2000, p. 186) explains that a focus group is “focused” in that it is associated with some form of collective activity. Hence, each focus group addressed five tasks, guided by a semi-structured interview guide. The researcher introduced each focus group with an explanation of the purpose of the session. It was stressed that there were no correct and incorrect answers to the various activities. The first task involved a discussion of two print advertisements, one for an unhealthy product (McDonald’s Happy Meal in Sweden [see appendix 1] and Ben & Jerry’s ice-cream in England [see appendix 2]) and the other for a healthy product (Arla high-protein milk in Sweden [see appendix 3] and innocent smoothies in England [see appendix 4]). A discussion of the meaning of *healthy* and *unhealthy foods* followed. Cards containing images/names of socialisation agents (*family, school, peers, shop environment, television advertising, print advertising, the internet, text messaging* [see appendix 5]) were then presented in an arbitrary order. The participants negotiated the order of importance of the

cards in terms of their influence upon their food choice, followed by a discussion of the nature of the influence. A discussion of food manufacturers' websites followed, after which the participants played an advergame on the Kellogg's Apple Jacks Cereal Games website (subsequently removed by Kellogg's). The participants then discussed the purpose of advergames. The final task commenced with a discussion of the participants' use of YouTube, after which they were shown television advertisements (Arla ordinary milk and Marabou chocolate in Sweden, innocent smoothies and Bird's Eye Chicken Grills in England), used to anchor a discussion on television advertising. At the end, the participants filled out an anonymous exit questionnaire (see appendix 6) collecting data on their television viewing behaviour, internet usage, etc. The duration of the focus groups was approximately 60 minutes.

Table 4.3 provides an overview of the composition of the focus groups. The researcher was able to ask for gender-specific groups and a mixed-gender group in Sweden. This opportunity did not present itself with the English school. However, Lunt and Livingstone (1996) recognise that new thinking within focus group design has involved moving away from a survey-sampling approach to one of engaging naturally occurring groups of like-minded people, with less concern with gender composition. In fact, all focus groups were mixed gender in a study investigating Australian children's perceptions of food advertising conducted by Mehta *et al.* (2010). For the fieldwork reported here, all but one group complied with Oates' (2000) recommendation that a manageable focus group size is between six and ten participants.

Focus groups:	Sweden	England
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1 • Group 2 • Group 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 boys • 6 boys and 4 girls • 7 girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 girls • 5 girls and 1 boy • 5 girls and 2 boys

Table 4.3: Composition of the focus groups.

4.6.3 Stage 2 – collage construction

This stage took place in October 2013 in Sweden and in June 2014 in England. The research aimed to gain insight into how young consumers aged 13 perceive themselves in terms of their characteristics and what influences and motivates them as consumers. In the spirit of Wetherell and

Maybin's (1996) contention that the self is socially constructed, resulting from a collaborative, provisional and contextual negotiation, collages were constructed jointly by groups of participants. It was necessary that the data generated during the fieldwork would allow a comparison of the *audience profiles* constructed by the English and Swedish participants. It was perceived that the findings would provide a foundation for the third and final stage of the research, which concerned communication strategies for advertising healthy eating targeting the age group. The participant-centred approach to visual research (Emmison *et al.*, 2012) described here and for stage 3, allowed for active involvement. In this style of qualitative research, visual materials may be used as a tool to decrease the power differential between the researcher and the participants (Emmison *et al.*, 2012) and so this was considered beneficial.

Saunders (2009, p. 23) outlines collage construction as an "interpretive visual technique", the end product of which is a "visual artwork" constructed from an "assemblage of different materials", for instance magazine images. Siemieniako and Kubacki (2013) depict collages as a visual methodology, allowing visual representations of ideas. Moisander and Valtonen (2006, p. 26) describe collages as a "product of discursive practice". As such, collages represent "visual language" and can be read as "visual cultural stories". Collage construction has been used in the domains of advertising and consumer behaviour in order to investigate desires, motives and needs (Belk *et al.*, 2003; Colakoglu and Littlefield, 2011), the concept of nostalgia (Havlena and Holak, 1996), adolescent girls' identification of beauty types (Martin and Peters, 2005), children's use of brands to create and communicate self-concepts (Chaplin and Roedder John, 2005) and female students' perceptions of their alcohol consumption (Siemieniako and Kubacki, 2013).

The selection of collage construction was compelling on a number of levels. Moisander and Valtonen (2006, p. 96) maintain that "collaborative and reflexive use of visuals" provide research participants with increased voice in representing study phenomena. This was seen as supporting the concern with participant empowerment and that the research should be conducted from their perspective. Emmison *et al.* (2012, pp. 20-21) refer to "participatory visual approaches" as a more "emancipatory style of qualitative research" and as such is gaining popularity in sociology in fields such as adolescence. Research participants take on the role of image-makers and may engage in a kind of "visual storytelling". Zaltman and Coulter (1995) recognise that although most communication is non-verbal, most consumer research is verbo-centric. This compromises the data collection process, which could be enhanced by research techniques allowing for non-verbal expressions.

Saunders (2009) maintains that a collage may offer a powerful image of the research subject, which would be hard to communicate simply using words. Costa *et al.* (2003) maintain that image-based consumer research may boost both creativity and consumer insight. Importantly, the technique has the power to produce rich research data (Colakoglu and Littlefield, 2011), add “rich detail” (Saunders, 2009, p. 21) and enhance engagement (Havlena and Holak, 1996; Colakoglu and Littlefield, 2011). For consumer profiling, the technique makes research participants’ “inner representations of experiences as ideas, imagery, and consumption practices” accessible (Cherrier, 2012, p. 93; also see Zaltman and Coulter, 1995; Belk *et al.*, 2003; Siemieniako and Kubacki, 2013). Table 4.4 summarises the reasons for the use of collage construction.

Table 4.4: Reasons for the use of collage construction (Sherrington, 2016).

- *Has the potential to amplify children’s voices.*
- *Addresses potential power imbalance between researcher and participants.*
- *Allows for research to be conducted from the children’s viewpoint.*
- *May assist in ensuring the children’s engagement with the research task.*
- *Recognises and responds to the fact that most communication is visual.*
- *Allows for more creativity within the research process, with the potential to generate rich data.*

Cherrier (2012) used collages in order to gain insight into consumers’ awareness of negative effects associated with fast-food consumption. Cherrier’s findings indicate that the failure of campaigns to discourage fast-food consumption may follow from a strong focus upon the individual, when a societal perspective in promoting healthy eating may be more effective. Siemieniako and Kubacki (2013) also argue for the capacity of collages to make visible the social side of the research issue. The motives of this thesis were similar to those of Siemieniako and Kubacki (2013), namely, ensuring that communications campaigns reflect the reality of the motivations and perceptions of the particular consumer group to deliver more targeted and effective communications (also see Havlena and Holak, 1996; Martin and Peters, 2005). The sum of these qualities were considered in tune with the social constructionist ontology informing the research and the client-orientation of social marketing (Hastings and Domegan, 2014).

The research took place in ordinary teaching accommodation. Table 4.5 provides an overview of the composition of the collage construction workshops.

Workshops:	Sweden	England
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1 • Group 2 • Group 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 boys • 4 boys and 4 girls • 5 girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 girls and 1 boy • 6 girls • 2 girls and 3 boys

Table 4.5: Composition of the collage construction workshops.

The researcher introduced the task verbally. Instructions were also provided on a worksheet. Each workshop was given the task of constructing a collage using images and words in order to describe ‘a typical 13-year-old consumer’ (boy and girl). Questions were put to the group as prompts (see table 4.6) and the participants were instructed to fill a poster sheet with images and words in response. The absence of right or wrong answers was stressed. The researcher made magazines and other suitable material available, as well as scissors, coloured pens and glue sticks. Magazines were selected to ensure availability of a wide variety of images suited to the worksheet questions (e.g. *Bliss*, *Cotswold catalogue*, *Go Girl*, *Hello*, *Lonely Planet*, *Match of the Day*, *OK*, *Runner’s World*, *Sainsbury’s Magazine*, *The Radio Times*, *Top Gear*, *Vogue*, *Waitrose Weekend*). During the collage construction groups in Sweden, it became apparent that the list of ten questions was ambitious in scope. The worksheets vanished under mounds of paper cuttings and the researcher needed to prompt the participants to address the questions. Hence, with the English groups a simplified design was used, where a smaller number of questions (see table 4.7) were presented individually in larger font on laminated cards.

The role adopted by the researcher was partly that of a silent observer, but who was on hand to answer questions and who would occasionally intervene in order to ensure that the collage construction remained on course. Towards the end of the session, the groups gave an account of the ‘typical 13-year-old male/female consumers’.

Table 4.6: Questions put to the Swedish workshops.

- *What activities do they tend to engage in during their spare time?*
- *How would you describe their 'way of life'?*
- *What are their most treasured possessions?*
- *What are their interests?*
- *What are their aspirations and dreams?*
- *What are their attitudes towards such concepts as 'organic', 'Fairtrade' and 'locally sourced' foods?*
- *Do they have opinions on current issues? What engages them in terms of what is happening in their immediate environment/their country/the world?*
- *What is their relationship to food brands?*
- *What are they like as food consumers/shoppers?*
- *You may wish to give him/her a name, as this may make it easier to actually describe the person as 'someone that you know'.*

Table 4.7: Questions put to the English workshops.

- *What do they do in their spare time?*
- *Which of their possessions are most important to them?*
- *What is their relationship to food brands?*
- *What are their aspirations and dreams?*
- *You may wish to give him/her a name, as this may make it easier to actually describe the person as 'someone that you know'.*

4.6.4 Stage 3 – advertisement evaluation and design of a healthy eating advertisement

The third stage of the research took place in December 2014 in Sweden and in June 2015 in England. This stage had two aims. Firstly, it sought to gain insight into 14-year-olds' reactions to current television advertisements promoting healthy eating/a healthy lifestyle in order to identify dominant discourses in relation to the topic. Secondly, it sought to allow for the participants to devise communication strategies appropriate for advertising healthy eating/foods to their own age group by designing their own advertisements.

The decision to include the advertisement evaluation element followed from the lack of interpretivist studies exploring creative strategy employed within food advertising. This gap meant that possibilities of consulting the academic literature on study designs were limited. However, it was decided to use a

similar approach to that used by Chan and Tsang (2011), who measured Hong Kong youths' attitudes to public service television advertisements promoting green lifestyles. Chan and Tsang's interview questions were adapted for use in the research (see table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Questions put to the online discussion boards.

- *Describe your reactions to this advertisement.*
- *What is the message from [Coca-Cola/Change4Life] in this advertisement?*
- *Describe what you like/do not like about this advertisement.*
- *Is the message convincing? Is it talking to you? Can it persuade you to do what the advertisement tells you to do?*

Further, the research design shared methodological similarities with a study described by Mehta *et al.* (2010), who used qualitative methods to invite the perspective of children into the debate associated with television food advertising and obesity. Whereas this thesis used specific advertisements, Mehta *et al.*'s study addressed television advertising in a general sense. In addition to collecting richer data concerned with the participants' reactions and attitudes towards advertisements, it was thought that this activity would help to set the scene for the more challenging advertisement design element.

Two television advertisements were selected for the evaluation: The Coca-Cola 'Grandpa – Living a Healthy Lifestyle' advertisement and the 'Be Food Smart' advertisement for the Change4Life campaign. The Coca-Cola advertisement was selected due to its apparent suggestion that this soft drink may form part of a healthy lifestyle. This proposition is in line with the findings from the literature review that some HFSS products are portrayed to imply that they form part of a healthy diet. The advertisement is for a global brand and uses vivid imagery and music appeal, with any verbal aspects presented in writing. As such, the advertisement was considered easy enough for the Swedish participants to grasp. Although somewhat outside of the intended target audience for the Change4Life advertisement (children aged 5-11 and adults aged 35+), the English participants were likely to have been exposed to aspects of this campaign previously. The advertisement uses distinct creative appeals and it was thought that the participants, the Swedes included, would find it straightforward to offer their opinions on these. Given that the advertisement forms part of the UK Government's "flagship programme" for preventing childhood obesity (PHE, 2014, p. 31), evaluations provided by young English consumers were considered valuable. Another reason for the selection was simply the absence of another

comparable campaign in both countries. Both advertisements were shown to the Swedish head teachers, who confirmed their pupils to have the required level of English language to be able to engage in an evaluation.

Hackley (2003) claims the value of having consumer insights frame and direct creative work is well established. Whilst this practice is common within the advertising industry, few academic studies were found in order to inform this stage of the research. In terms of advertisement design, Bartholomew and O'Donohue (2003) report on a research initiative where children were asked how they would go about creating an advertisement for an imaginary soft drink. Insight was collected by means of focus group discussions, where the participants gave detailed verbal suggestions for advertising strategies.

It was originally intended that stage 3 would be sited on Facebook, using a closed discussion group. The element where the participants evaluated television advertisements was to be conducted separately for the two nationalities. For the advertisement design element, the intention was for both nationalities to post creative ideas for a healthy eating campaign in the same closed Facebook group. However, recruitment in Sweden for stage 3 experienced difficulties, making the chosen research design not viable. In communications with the form tutor, it was found that the expectation that own free time would be used to engage in the research presented an obstacle for the participants. Parents' concern about the online research site may have presented another obstacle. Online research ethics take on particular importance with vulnerable groups (Murthy, 2008; Willett, 2009) and on advice from the school, Padlet (www.padlet.com) would be acceptable to parents' frequent concern about the internet and child safety (Newman and Oates, 2014). Padlet may be described as an online wall, which allows contributors to share their thoughts on what works somewhat like a virtual piece of paper. At this stage, the Swedish school proposed that they conduct this stage of the study on behalf of the researcher. As a consequence, this stage was carried out with a mixed-gender school class of 30 pupils, containing the participants from the previous two stages of the research.

The form tutor was issued with written instructions on how to facilitate the Padlet discussions. Web-based research has the advantage of removing the requirement for physical proximity between researcher and participants, thus introducing greater flexibility into the research process (Efken, 2002). The researcher followed the online discussion in real time from the UK in the role of a silent observer. The participants were aware that the exercise was being observed. In recognition of the fact that English was their second language, the participants were shown the advertisements twice. The advertisements were dealt with in turn, and at the end of each one, the form tutor posed a number of discussion questions to the participants. The participants posted

their contributions on Padlet. They had the option of remaining anonymous through their choice of user name, but had been assured that they would not be personally identified in public output from the study. This type of synchronous (Muratore, 2008) online research hosted by the school also had the advantage that the researcher had control over who participated. The online discussion lasted approximately 40 minutes. Searches of academic databases did not return any studies reporting the use of Padlet in fieldwork and by implication this study offers new insight into the use of this online wall as a research site with young consumers.

The advertisement design session that followed was again led by the Swedish form tutor, who had been issued with written guidelines on facilitation. The instructions were also made available to the participants on a work-sheet (see appendix 7). The participants worked in small groups and had up to two hours to complete their design.

To enable comparison between the research outputs, it was decided that a similar approach would be used with the English school. These sessions, however, were led by the researcher. There were three sessions altogether. Table 4.9 provides an overview of the composition of the online discussion boards/design workshops.

Discussion boards/workshops:	Participants:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1 • Group 2 • Group 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 girls and 2 boys • 3 girls and 3 boys • 6 girls and 1 boy

Table 4.9: Composition of the online discussion boards/design workshops in England.

The first part of each session consisted of showing the two television advertisements (as in Sweden, they were shown twice). The participants posted their views onto Padlet in response to the questions posed by the researcher. The second part involved the participants working in small teams designing a healthy eating advertisement. In order for the research to fit around the participants' school commitments, each group was allocated approximately 90 minutes for the two tasks. The research took place in an ordinary class-room in the school.

4.7 Discourse analysis of a set of food advertisements

A discourse analysis was conducted on the television advertisements used for the evaluation in stage 3. This initiative responded to Prell *et al.*'s (2011) argument that it is important to highlight discursive structures of food advertising, as these represent constructions of food that children are exposed to. Consequently, this analysis provided insight into advertising discourse employed by contemporary food-related advertising, albeit in a concentrated fashion by focusing on a small number of advertisements, all from 2013. A Swedish advertisement was included, facilitating a cross-national comparison. The advertisement was by Lantmännen, a Swedish agricultural co-operative. This advertisement was selected in the absence of a Swedish equivalent to the Change4Life campaign (as the Lantmännen advertisement is in Swedish, it could not be used for the evaluation in stage 3). It was felt a careful analysis of the advertisements would assist the researcher's analysis of the research participants' discussions.

4.8 Approaches to data analysis

Hackley (2001) argues that *social texts* (for this thesis, focus group transcriptions, collages, online discussion wall postings and advertisements designed by the participants, as well as the existing television advertisements described in the previous section) are open to differing interpretation. He recommends discourse analysis within a social constructionist ontological framework, as within social construction one looks for "the ways life is worked up through language and other symbolic practices rather than postulating hidden causes in a deductive process of successive hypothesising" (p. 46). Fairclough (2003) claims language is an irreducible part of social life and that social research always has to take account of language. Further support for the use of discourse analysis can be collected from Simunaniemi *et al.* (2012), who recognise that people gain knowledge in social communication and maintain that perceptions of healthy eating represent "a product of social practices in which language plays a central role" (p. 67). Essentially, in a social constructionist spirit, discourse analysis entails a focus on the use of language in context. Bucknall (2014, p. 72) maintains that 'voice' is not an autonomous, but a social production, requiring communication to be recognised as a local, interactional activity. Alldred and Burman's (2005) notion of discourse similarly points to the importance of *context*. Consequently, it is important to contextualise the accounts that children give researchers (and the researcher's interpretation of these accounts), by explicit reference to the social context, the peer group, etc., which leads back to social cognitive theory and Bandura's (2004) contention of the importance of the socio-structural environment in facilitating

or impeding health behaviour. Location and context in a physical sense may impact on the researcher-researched relationship. As previously recognised, the predisposition of schools to reinforce adult-child power (Westcott and Littleton, 2005; Kellett, 2010) must be recognised.

Moisander and Valtonen (2006) characterise a constructionist perspective as drawing upon hermeneutic philosophy, which is concerned with the ontology of understanding. A key assumption of hermeneutic thinking is *pre-understanding*; we belong to a socio-historically inherited world and tradition, providing us with a pre-understanding that impacts our interpretations. The interpreter's temporally, socially and culturally conditioned knowledge of the research topic, and disciplinary, academic knowledge represent interrelated sets of pre-understanding. Taken together they form an orienting frame of reference for the process of interpretation. This pre-understanding may evolve and change during the research process and needs to be recognised for its influence on the research (Hackley, 2001; 2003; Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). This is addressed in section 4.10.

A widely used general process of interpretation is that of the *hermeneutic circle*. This concept is based on the idea that in order to understand the part (e.g. a detail of discursive practice), the interpreter needs to apprehend the whole (e.g. transcripts of focus group talk, relevant cultural discourses, the discursive context). The process of interpretation proceeds through a series of back-and-forth, part-to-whole iterations. The goal of *hermeneutic interpretation* is to produce different interpretations to bring about change. The researcher's task is to challenge the obvious and provide new interpretations of the world (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). The process of understanding is circular and never ending, as we continuously re-evaluate and revise our understanding of the social world (Clarke, 2006). In fact, given that some advertising campaigns run over a long period of time with new advertisements providing a variation on the original concept, further data is provided at intervals in order to feed the hermeneutic circle. The Change4Life campaign is a good example, whereby since its inception in 2009 a series of advertisements and other forms of marketing communications have been introduced to keep the campaign running, introducing new sub-brands along the '4Life' theme and tackling various lifestyle challenges along the way. Figure 4.5 visualises the hermeneutic approach to analysing talk about food advertising within the focus groups.

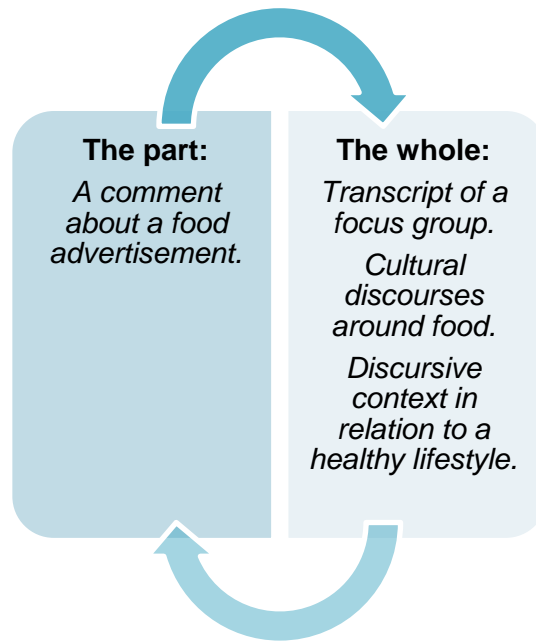


Figure 4.5: Hermeneutic circle for the analysis of talk about food advertising (Sherrington, 2016).

The fieldwork produced verbal and visual data. The literature review found that very little attention has been paid to the visual aspects associated with food advertising. This is surprising, given the powerful visual elements of television advertising, the centrality of visual aspects to the product category of food and, more generally, the fact that we live in a world that places great emphasis upon the visual (Soat, 2014). In fact, Emmison *et al.* (2012) describe the ubiquity of visual images as a defining feature of postmodern society.

Emmison *et al.* (2012) recognise that visual research has never presented a unitary theoretical or methodological face, meaning it is not possible to speak of *the* method to conducting research in a visual way. Similarly, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) note the absence of an established theoretical framework within which visual forms of representation can be discussed. They refer to *visual social research* as a “burgeoning academic field” (p. 20), with the literature offering various approaches to visual data analysis. Hearn and Thomson (2014) recognise that images can be counted and categorised, but also seen as discourse and narrative. Scott (1994, p. 264) proposes that advertising images may be understood as a “discursive form”, much like writing and capable of delivering subtle nuances in communications. Moisander and Valtonen (2006) recommend that visual images be analysed as *texts*, based on a particular visual vocabulary and a visual grammar. Further, they propose that images should be analysed and interpreted by

relating them to the social and cultural arrangements in which they are produced. Images tend to be connected and get their meaning in relation to other cultural texts and images within particular discursive systems. Hence, meanings are inter-textual (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006).

In the spirit of social constructionist epistemology (Hackley, 2001), the data analysis focused upon *language*, with the aim to explore discourses emerging in each research stage. An overview of the approach is offered here and is illustrated in figure 4.6. The subsequent sections describe the data analysis of each stage in detail.

Stage 1 sought to identify and characterise the dominant discourses of food advertising/healthy eating among the participants. Discourse analysis (Brown and Yule, 1983; Paltridge, 2012) was used to identify recurrent themes within the discussions, further analysis of which allowed a set of discourses to emerge.

Stage 2 aimed to ascertain how the adolescents perceive themselves as consumers. A more focused stage, the spotlight turned upon the young consumers themselves. Commensurate with social marketing's client orientation (Hastings and Domegan, 2014), the collages were analysed as detailed consumer profiles in preparation for stage 3, where advertisements were designed appropriate for the consumers portrayed in stage 2.

Stage 3 explored the participants' discourse around two health-promoting television advertisements. This enabled comparison with the discourses identified in stage 1 and allowed for exploration for signs of further consumer socialisation (Roedder John, 1999). The participants designed their own healthy eating advertisements. In common with stage 2, the analysis dealt with the visual as well as the verbal and was informed by the socially constructed consumers in stage 2.

The final stage involved a discourse analysis conducted by the researcher on contemporary television advertisements promoting healthy living. Exploring contemporary advertising discourse – verbal and visual – allowed an investigation of socio-structural factors (Bandura, 2004) of the type that influence young consumer behaviour.

Table 4.10 provides an overview of key statistics of the fieldwork stages, including the data collected.

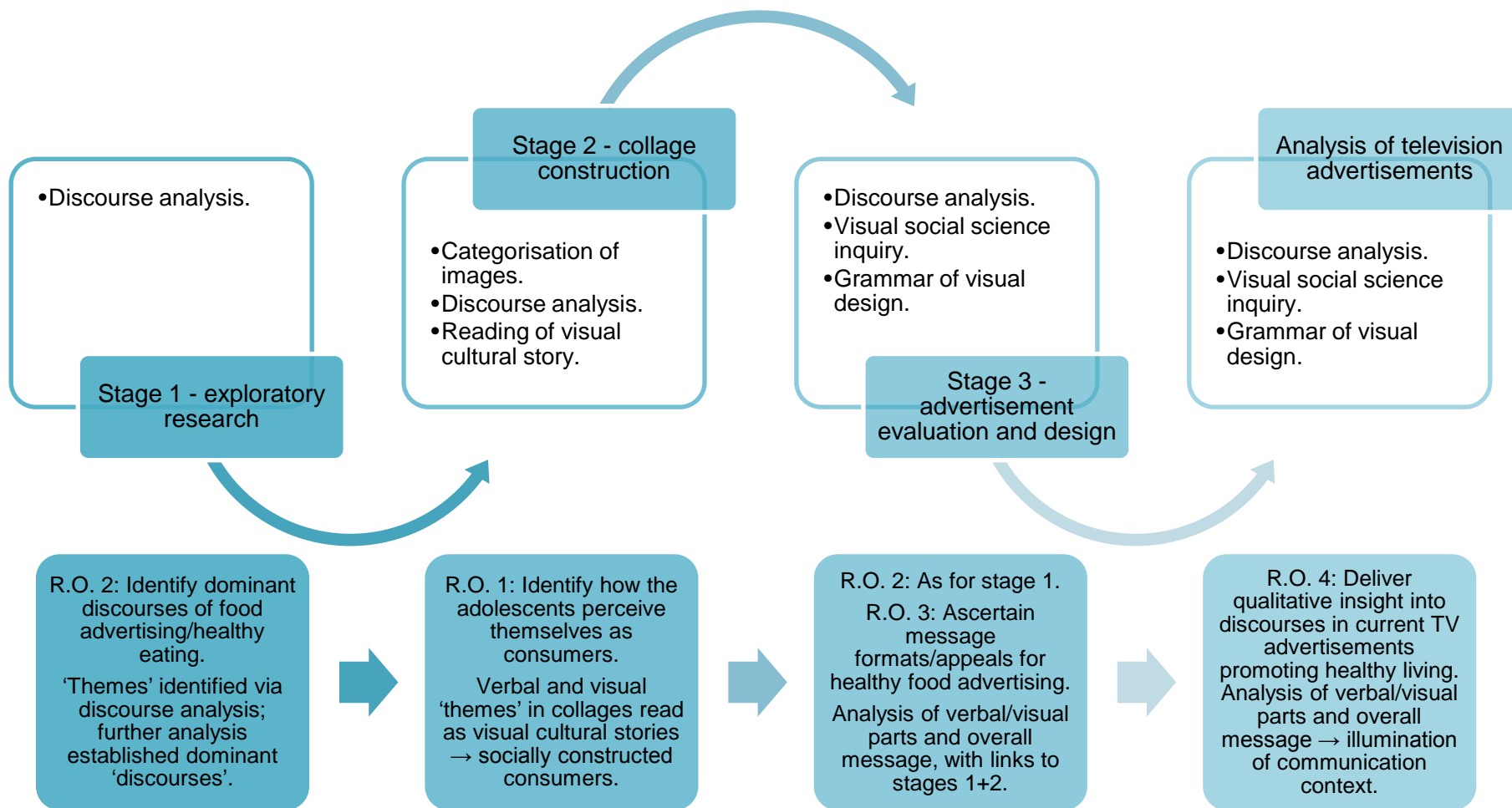


Figure 4.6: Sequence of data analysis (Sherrington, 2016).

	Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3 – part 1		Stage 3 – part 2	
	Sweden	England	Sweden	England	Sweden	England	Sweden	England
Timing	Aug 2012	June 2013	Oct 2013	June 2014	Dec 2014	June 2015	Dec 2014	June 2015
Location	Swedish school	English school	Swedish school	English school	Online - Padlet	Online - Padlet	Swedish school	English school
Total number of participants	26	17	22	17	Mixed-gender class of 30, containing previous participants	19	Mixed-gender class of 30, containing previous participants	19
Gender of participants	15 boys; 11 girls	3 boys; 14 girls	13 boys; 9 girls	4 boys; 13 girls		6 boys; 13 girls		6 boys; 13 girls
Attrition since previous stage	N/a	N/a	4	3	0	6	0	6
Number of new recruits	N/a	N/a	0	3	8	8	8	8
Method	3 focus groups	3 focus groups	3 Collage construction workshops	3 Collage construction workshops	Online discussion board	Online discussion board	Advertisement design workshop	3 advertisement design workshops
Type of data	Transcribed talk	Transcribed talk	Collages, audio-recordings of workshops	Collages, audio-recordings of workshops	Padlets (transcribed discussion boards)	Padlets (transcribed discussion boards)	Advertisements; posters and films	Advertisements; posters and films
Amount of data	89 transcribed pages	71 transcribed pages	3 collages; 3x60 minutes audio-recordings	3 collages; 3x60 minutes audio-recordings	2 Padlets	2 Padlets	6 posters and 2 films	5 posters and 2 films

Table 4.10: Key statistics of the fieldwork stages.

4.8.1 Analysis of stage 1 – the exploratory research

The researcher transcribed all focus groups verbatim. The audio files were listened to repeatedly in order to ensure that the transcription was as true a representation of the focus group conversations as possible. Potter and Wetherell (1987, p. 165) describe transcription as a “constructive activity”, where at times the transcriber struggles to make clear decisions about what exactly is said and then to represent those words in a conventional orthographic system. Alldred and Burman (2005) maintain that the transcriber uses her own understanding of the meanings intended, making multiple transcriptions of the same conversation possible. The researcher translated the transcripts of the Swedish focus groups into English, which added another layer of interpretation in trying to ensure that the translations were as true records as possible of the interpreted intended meaning.

The data collected during this stage was ‘talk’, which was analysed using discourse analysis. This decision was guided by the second research objective, which sought to *identify and characterise the dominant discourses in relation to food advertising/healthy eating among adolescents*. Accordingly, it was seen as a way to gain insight into and allow comparison between how participants from the two study countries communicate and express beliefs about food and food advertising. Further, as the primary purpose of a discourse analysis is to provide a deeper understanding of texts (Paltridge, 2012), this choice of analysis supported the thesis aim of *developing in-depth appreciation of the consumer group*.

The approach used was informed by Brown and Yule’s (1983) discussion of “topic and the representation of discourse content” (p. 68), where the concept of “topic” is understood as “what is being talked about” (p. 71). Brown and Yule maintain that when considering speech with some purpose (here, focus group talk elicited by questions posed by the researcher), topics reside with speakers, rather than sentences. Rather than a finely grained deconstruction of individual sentences, the analysis sought to identify topics in recognition of Brown and Yule’s claim of a connection between “discourse topic” and “discourse content” (p. 107). In doing so, the researcher used the terms ‘theme’ (equivalent to *discourse topic*) and ‘discourse’ (equivalent to *discourse content*). Hence, the transcribed text was read closely in order to identify dominant themes, which in turn were analysed in order to establish *discourses* or particular ways of talking about healthy eating and aspects of food advertising. This analytical process was conducted taking into account the social and cultural contexts relevant to the participants and their discussion (Paltridge, 2012). Hall (1997) defines a discourse as a cluster of ideas, images and practices that provides ways of talking about a particular topic. Fairclough (2003) proposes that a discourse is a particular way of representing some part of the social world and that there are alternative

discourses associated with different groups of people. Establishing these discourses among adolescents was seen as essential in order to inform the promotion of healthy foods to the age group. The operation of the focus groups permitted participants to roam beyond the semi-structured focus group questions (Mehta *et al.*, 2010), allowing the participants to introduce additional, related themes.

Figure 4.7 provides an illustration of the analytical process on a fragment of discourse from one of the English focus groups. This shows how the transcript was annotated with themes that kept emerging during the transcription and subsequent reading of the transcript. Further analysis of these themes and others helped establish the dominant discourses around food and food advertising. The themes are colour coded, corresponding with five overall discourses that were subsequently established in the overall analysis.



Figure 4.7: Fragment of a focus group transcript demonstrating the coding process.

4.8.2 Analysis of stage 2 – the consumer collages

Pachler (2014) highlights as a shortcoming of the collage literature its lack of guidelines to assist in their interpretation. Pachler recognises that in most studies, the interpretation criteria applied are vague, lack transparency or are even missing. With limited guidance in the literature, the researcher needed to settle on a method of analysis appropriate for the visual and verbal data of the collages and that fitted a social constructionist perspective. Accordingly, it was decided to follow the overall guidance of Pachler to use an interpretation procedure that would follow the concept of the *hermeneutic circle* (see section 4.8). Commensurate with this approach, it is not possible to interpret a collage by looking at single images in isolation. Rather, it is necessary to look at images in relation to each other and the overall context. Accordingly, in the analysis used, ‘parts’ referred to single elements in the collages (images and words), whereas the ‘whole’ referred to the collages in their entirety and the context in which they were constructed. It follows that it is necessary to understand a single element of the collage, in order to understand the collage as a whole. By the same token, it is necessary to grasp the collage in its entirety, as well as its context, in order to understand why a single image was selected (Pachler, 2014).

The first analysis stage used *categorisation*, which was a method of mapping the ‘parts’. Units of data – images and words – were classified as representing a more general category (Spiggle, 1994), each of which received a *label*. The visual images were not analysed in their own right, but allowed a means for the participants to communicate aspects of their lives, experiences and identities (Emmison *et al.*, 2012). As such, the collages were seen to represent *visual language* to be read as a *visual cultural story* (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). The emerging themes – verbal and visual – were analysed using the principles of discourse analysis described in section 4.8.1, where the focus was on “what was being talked about” (Brown and Yule, 1983, p. 71) taking the social and cultural contexts into account (Paltridge, 2012). This analysis took place within the social constructionist perspective of the *distributed self*, important assumptions of which are that the self is continuously shaped and re-shaped through interactions with others and that language, talk and discourse provide raw materials for the construction of the self (Wetherell and Maybin, 1996; see section 4.3.1).

Equipped with the collage labels (‘parts’) and the audio-recordings of the collage construction workshops, including the participants’ verbal summaries of the ‘typical consumers’ delivered at the end (part of ‘the whole’), the researcher wrote ‘narrated vignettes’ of twelve named, ‘typical 13-year-old consumers’ emerging from the data. This process was informed by insight picked up during the stage 1 focus groups (another part of ‘the whole’). The vignettes, in their position as “empirically sourced narratives”, describe

socially constructed consumers as portrayed in the collages and spoken about by the research participants (Quinn and Patterson, 2013, p. 730). In common with the quest for creative research techniques, it was deemed important to report the findings in a creative way that not only represents the voice of the participants, but makes the research more accessible to the audience (Friend and Thompson, 2000; 2003). Consequently, the purpose was for the collages and narrated vignettes combined to bring the consumers to life (Quinn and Patterson, 2013).

4.8.3 Analysis of stage 3 – the advertisement evaluation and the participant-designed advertisements

The use of Padlet as a research site had the added advantage that the Padlets could be downloaded as pdf files of ready-transcribed text. The Swedish Padlets were translated into English. The discourse analysis of the Padlets was conducted with the same objective as described in section 4.8.1, namely to search for “discourse content” (Brown and Yule, 1983, p. 71) or *discourses*. The analysis used a format similar to that described by Simunaniemi *et al.* (2012) in their analysis of discourses in a sample of fruit and vegetable-related weblog texts. Accordingly, the analysis began by reading the postings on the discussion wall with an open mind to identify recurrent patterns in the data. A number of *preliminary themes* were identified and coded into thematic categories. Following further reading of the postings, in the second phase the preliminary themes were crystallised into *themes*. In the third stage, the themes were categorised into a range of *main discourses*.

The advertisements designed by the research participants were emailed to the researcher. They varied in their presentation from poster advertisements to simple films. Accordingly, for the verbal elements, the analysis employed the approach to discourse analysis described in section 4.8.1 (Brown and Yule, 1983; Paltridge, 2012). The images contained in the advertisements were thought of as ‘like language’ and were ‘read’ in order to interpret their meaning in a similar way to the advertising copy (Hall, 1997, p. 5). In common with Emmison *et al.*’s (2012, p. 113) principles, the researcher looked for “manifest themes” across images, whilst also exploring the social aspects displayed. The analysis then used aspects of Emmison *et al.*’s (2012) approach to *visual social science inquiry*. The researcher attempted to approach the visual data “sociologically” with the aim of investigating how the data may serve as “sources of concrete visual information about the abstract concepts and processes which are central to organising everyday social life” (p. 63).

The researcher also used Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) *grammar of visual design*, a particular approach to visual semiotics where the visual representation is set within the theoretical framework of *social semiotics*. Kress and van Leeuwen claim that most accounts of *visual semiotics* have focused upon what may be regarded as the equivalence of words. Accordingly, signs are recognised as ready-made and available for use. (In *social semiotics*, the focus is upon *sign-making*.) Kress and van Leeuwen's *visual grammar* concentrates on how visual elements combine in *visual statements* into *meaningful wholes*, with attention paid to representational, interactive and compositional patterns. The resulting visual structures refer to particular interpretations of experience and forms of social interaction. As such, meanings belong to culture, rather than semiotic modes. Kress and van Leeuwen maintain that the study of visual grammar is neglected and regard their work on social semiotics as a contribution to a "broadened critical discourse analysis" (p. 14). This process of data analysis is depicted in figure 4.8.

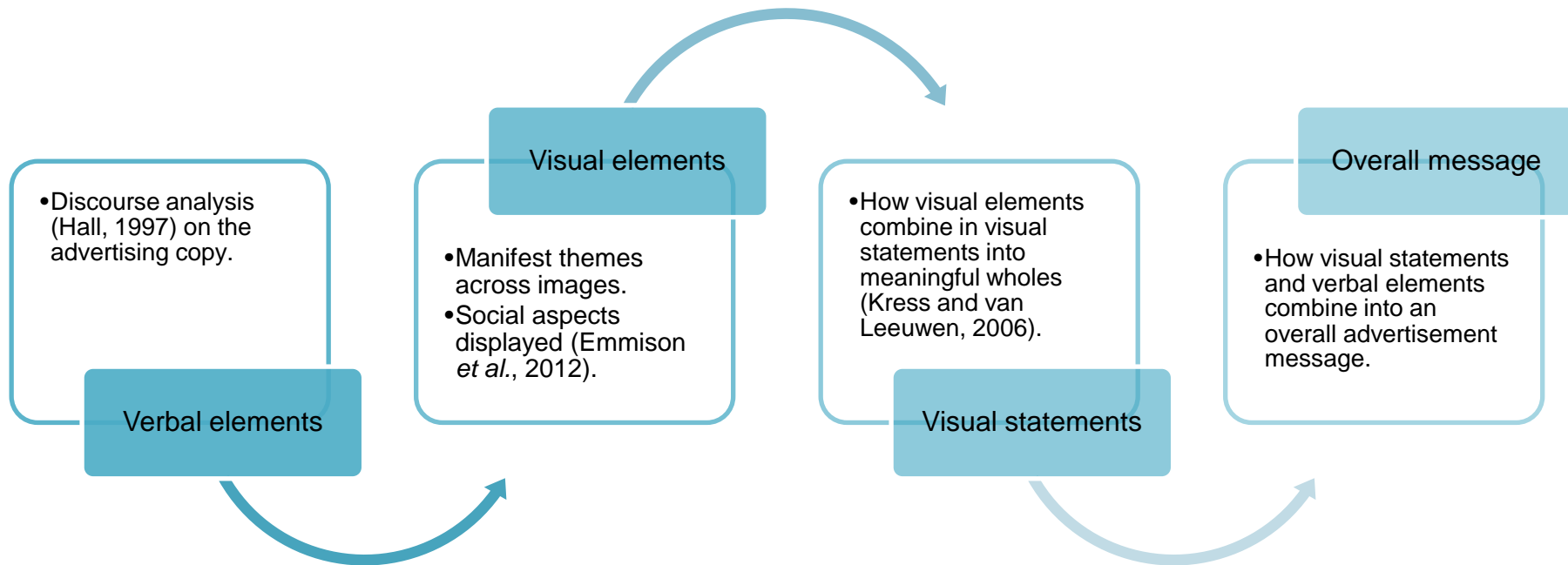


Figure 4.8: Process of analysis of the participant-designed advertisements (Sherrington, 2016).

4.8.4 Analysis of the television advertisements

The television advertisements – Coca-Cola ‘Grandpa – Living a Healthy Lifestyle’, Change4Life ‘Be Food Smart’ and Lantmännen ‘Together we take responsibility from field to fork’ – were analysed according to the principles of discourse analysis (Brown and Yule, 1983; Paltridge, 2012) as well as Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) *grammar of visual design* and aspects of Emmison *et al.*’s (2012) *visual social science inquiry*. This approach recognised the “multimodality” of the advertisements in that they represented a combination of different modes, such as language, images and music (Gee, 2011, p. 194). The researcher watched and listened to the advertisements frame by frame. Text, talk, voiceovers, images, movement, action, music and sound effects were considered. The analysis was hermeneutic in character. Accordingly, the researcher paid detailed attention to individual elements, such as the action played out in individual frames and how this related to the advertisement as a whole and beyond, by taking into consideration relevant cultural discourses and the discursive context (see figure 4.9).

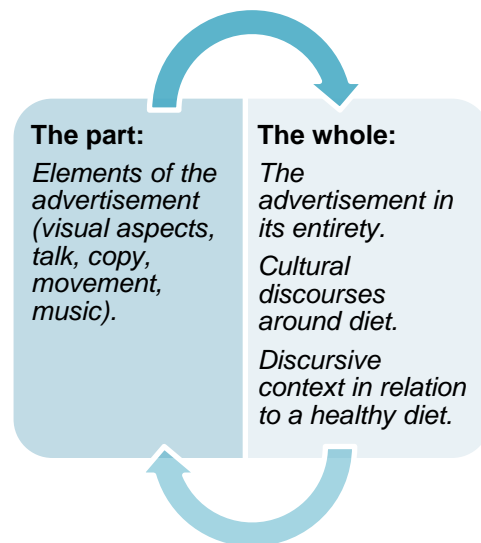


Figure 4.9: Hermeneutic circle for the analysis of television advertisements (Sherrington, 2016).

The analysis was conducted in the context of the Global Age (Albrow, 1996) and Risk Society (Beck, 1992) and was influenced by the thinking of Michel Foucault in relation to *Disciplinary Society* (Clarke, 2006, pp. 84-108). Albrow (1996) refers to a new reality – the *Global Age* – that ventures beyond the

concepts of modernity⁶ and post-modernity⁷. Albrow points to forces that have taken society into a new epoch, among them the *globality of communication systems*, the *rise of a global economy* and the *reflexivity of globalisation*; the latter a situation where people use the whole world as the frame of reference for their beliefs. Albrow claims that jointly these forces threaten modernity and the enduring institution of the nation state. Robertson (1992) recognises a deep awareness of the world as a *single place*.

Importantly, Robertson recognises that globalisation is not just about interdependence, but also about how horizons open up in a cross-cultural production of meaning and cultural symbols. He labels this concept *glocalisation*. Within this concept, *global* and *local* are not mutually exclusive; rather, as the *universal* (global) and the *particular* (local), they are intertwined. As such, the local represents an aspect of the global; the global draws together local communities. We are experiencing a worldwide trend emphasising the uniformity and *universal* nature of institutions, organisations, signs and symbols. Concurrently, there is a trend associated with the local and *particular*, emphasising local culture and identity.

Beck (1992) maintains that we live in a Risk Society, where the social production of wealth is accompanied by the social production of risk. Risk has always been present, but now we live in a global Risk Society driven by science and technology. Risks come in many forms – global warming, industrial pollution and diet-related risks, etc. Risks are often hidden, escaping immediate detection. Few people know quite how many sugar lumps there are in a can of soft drink and many are not cognisant of the potential long-term health consequences of consuming too much sugar. Chemical pest control enters the food chain to realise year-round supply of what once was seasonal produce. With global food chains, risks are no longer tied to their place of origin and so escape control. In brief, in a quest to make society more rational, control nature and predict the future, Risk Society represents an era where the undesirable consequences of progress make up key topics of discourse in social debate.

Foucault showed how *expert discourses* develop systems of *knowledge* that in turn sustain relations of *power* and domination in society. According to Foucault, the relationship between knowledge and power gives rise to expert systems, where discursive practices discipline body and mind. People's

⁶ *Modernity* is a phase in history characterised by rapid social change in terms of industrialisation, urbanisation, changes in political philosophy, dislocation, mobility and growth of nationalism. This epoch sees science as the dominant mode of cognition (Clarke, 2006).

⁷ *Postmodernity* is a new epoch in history where social and political theory see a shift in emphasis from realism to relativism; a rejection of universal truths and knowledge systems; the self as fragmented and decentred, and power and discourse interconnected (Clarke, 2006).

habits and lifestyles are constructed by application of corrective power and surveillance permeating society. The epitome of Disciplinary Society is the notion of the *Panopticon* or the *All Seeing Eye*, where a state of conscious and permanent visibility assures an automatic functioning of power (Clarke, 2006, pp. 84-108).

4.9 Establishing the quality of the research design

This section discusses criteria for assessing the quality of the research inquiry. The discussion will then explore how, by necessity, the research approach had to change during the course of the research and what implications this may have had.

4.9.1 Assessing the quality of the empirical research

Moisander and Valtonen (2006) claim that our knowledge of the world and the criteria that we apply in order to evaluate knowledge are contextual, plural, contested and subject to change. Whereas quantitative research is conventionally evaluated in terms of *validity*, *reliability* and *generalisability* (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006; Saunders *et al.*, 2016, p. 202), the epistemological positions regarding these constructs are different within qualitative research.

The concept of *validity* (the truth/accuracy of the representations made by the researcher) is problematic, as there is not one single, social reality to discover. This thesis does not make validity claims, but offers the strength of deep insight collected from participants of two nationalities from their own perspective (Hackley, 2001). Hence, the thesis fulfils the quality criterion of *deep, participant-centred insight*. Saunders *et al.* (2016) offer the parallel criterion of *credibility*; ensuring that the representations of the research participants' socially constructed realities reflect what they intended. Here, the longitudinal aspect of the research ensured building of trust and rapport, as well as the generation of a large amount of data.

The concept of *reliability* (whether the research project may be repeated and produce the same results) is similarly problematic in that cultural knowledge is contextual and it is not possible to produce consistent measurements of social reality. The evaluation of the *reliability* of a qualitative research study may need to switch to an assessment of the extent to which the research has been conducted systematically and rigorously (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). Accordingly, a range of research techniques were used, as both the social constructionist perspective and the research population of children call for a variety of approaches, in order to satisfy the criterion of *rigour of*

research design. Saunders *et al.* (2016) use the criterion of *dependability*; offering a reliable/dependable account of the research methodology. This chapter provides a detailed description of the research, ensuring that it may be comprehended and evaluated by others.

In terms of *generalisability* (the ability to extend the research findings from a sample population to the population at large), Moisander and Valtonen (2006) suggest that *transferability* may be a more appropriate concept (also see Saunders *et al.*, 2016). This refers to whether or not the results can be transferred and applied to other contexts and situations. Here the thesis makes a contribution in the form of an extended social cognitive theory model, in combination with strategic and tactical recommendations for communications and persuasion. It is proposed that the model and the recommendations for communications/persuasion apply across media and a variety of behaviour change contexts.

Finally, Saunders *et al.* (2016) propose the additional criterion of *authenticity*. This criterion promotes fairness, for instance by representation of all views in the research. Consequently, a range of creative, age-appropriate research techniques gave the participants the opportunity to express themselves verbally and visually. What is more, the Swedish participants used their first language, an important aspect in order to optimise research data quality (Irvine *et al.*, 2008).

The above discussion is summarised in figure 4.10.

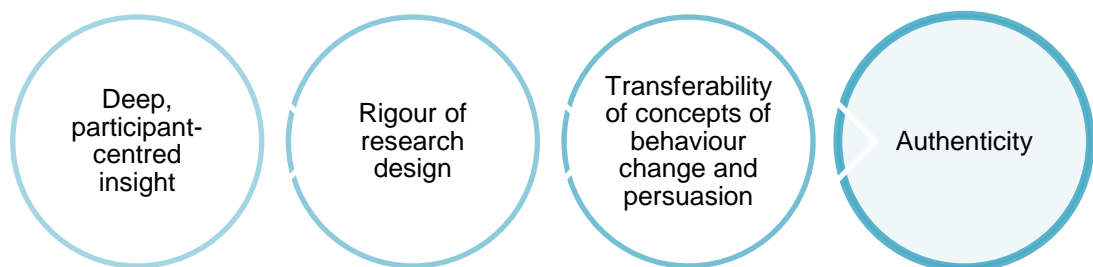


Figure 4.10: Criteria appropriate for the evaluation of the empirical research (adapted from Hackley, 2001; Moisander and Valtonen, 2006 and Saunders et al., 2016).

4.9.2 Adoption of amendments to the study

As explained in section 4.6.4, an amendment had to be made to the final study stage. The original plan involved a closed Facebook group as fieldwork site. This research design simply proved too complex to realise. Whereas some Swedish participants did request entry into the group, the numbers were insufficient. The researcher made two recruitment attempts, the second of which involved a presentation delivered at the Swedish school. As it was more important that the study continued with the same participants than it was to realise the initial research design, the researcher accepted an alternative plan proposed by the school involving the use of Padlet and an advertisement design workshop led by the form tutor. This involved relinquishing some control over the research process. However, in order to retain as much control as possible, the researcher worked closely with the form tutor, deciding upon the research arrangements and issuing detailed guidelines for conducting the research.

As part of a pilot run, the researcher “met with” the participants on Padlet some time prior to the research event and then watched the actual proceedings live. The quality of the fieldwork data was comparable to that generated at the equivalent sessions in England led by the researcher. It is difficult to ascertain what was potentially lost by not conducting the originally planned joint English-Swedish fieldwork. However, an advantage of the resulting arrangements was the construction of complete advertisements, when the activities on Facebook might have led to plenty of creative ideas that were not joined up into creative concepts. Importantly, the resulting research design still allowed for cross-national comparison.

There was some attrition associated with the study, with new participants joining the study in stages 2 and 3 (see table 4.10). Again, it is difficult to see how this might have influenced the study. However, it is not regarded as having influenced the study negatively, as the new participants came from the same classes at the schools and the study did not involve the measurement of the same phenomena displayed by the same set of participants over the course of the study.

4.10 Researcher reflexivity

The processes of hearing and analysing involve interpretation (Alldred and Burman, 2005), making active and subjective researcher involvement a necessity in the process of representing children's voices. As a consequence, the researcher's individuality shapes both the data and the findings (Fraser *et al.*, 2014), with researcher reflexivity providing an essential orienting frame of reference (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). Researcher reflexivity represents a methodological principle of critical and qualitative social inquiry, forming a prerequisite for a critical approach to marketing research (Hackley, 2001). This section provides a brief reflection by the researcher on how her pre-understanding and life-stage may have influenced the study. The discussion is structured around the notion of the researcher wearing different hats, signifying her repertoire of life roles.

4.10.1 The 'parental' hat

The interest in the topic of children and advertising was sparked by the researcher's two young sons. It was when one of them, aged around five, started speaking about advertisements he had seen on television that the researcher wondered what he actually understood by an advertisement. At this stage, the researcher began consulting the vast literature associated with children and advertising. The role of parent has inevitably driven the engagement with and the interest in the research topic, which came to focus on food advertising in the context of childhood obesity.



*Image 4.1: The 'parental' hat
(photograph: Sherrington, 2016).*

4.10.2 The 'me' hat

The researcher grew up in Sweden and started her undergraduate degree in international marketing in 1991, the same year that Sweden got its first commercial television channel and television advertising was introduced. As a consequence, prior to this time the researcher had only been exposed to this type of marketing communication at visits to the cinema and remembers perceiving the advertisements as entertaining and “part of the cinema experience” not to be missed, a view commonly shared by cinema-goers of a similar age. Having lived in England since 1998, the researcher sees herself as belonging to both cultures, with an ability (possibly over-estimated!) of still being able to apply a fairly fresh gaze to both.



*Image 4.2: The 'me' hat
(photograph: Sherrington, 2016).*

4.10.3 The 'citizen and consumer' hat

The researcher is continuously exposed to news items associated with health, food, organisations' marketing practices, etc. At the time of writing, the UK Government has announced the introduction of a sugar levy (Gallagher, 2016; Gwynn, 2016b; Trigg, 2016). The researcher meets with other people in various locations within an overall social environment. As a consumer, she is targeted by advertising in various media and at the point-of-sale. These experiences will have influenced the design, management and analysis of the empirical research.



*Image 4.3: The 'citizen and consumer' hat
(photograph: Sherrington, 2016).*

4.10.4 The 'PhD student' hat

The notion of pursuing a study from an interpretivist perspective within the realm of social constructionism means that an objective perspective cannot be achieved. However, the researcher has attempted to remain open-minded and has not pursued the study from the angle of someone obsessed with healthy living. Extensive perusing of the academic literature on food advertising targeting young consumers has naturally deepened the researcher's understanding of the topic area and so influenced the design and analysis of the fieldwork.



Image 4.4: The 'PhD student' hat (photograph: Sherrington, 2016).

4.10.5 The 'lecturer' hat

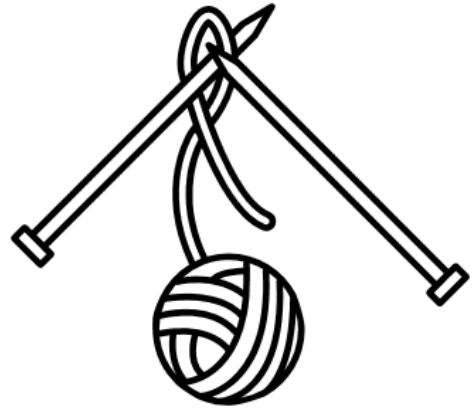
In her professional life, the researcher works as a university lecturer in marketing. As a consequence, she had extensive academic pre-understanding of the general area of marketing, but significantly less so of the research area at the time her interest was sparked in the research topic. Engaging in discussions with marketing students and colleagues within an academic environment encourages continuous reflection around the thesis topic.



Image 4.5: The 'lecturer' hat (photograph: Sherrington, 2016).

4.10.6 The 'researcher' hat

Continuing the hat metaphor, it would be reasonable to suggest that the design, management and analysis of the empirical research have been conducted wearing a 'researcher' hat that is knitted⁸ together by strands from all the other hats. This hat is an assemblage of the others and it is always on – it is not possible to throw it off!



4.11 Summary

Hackley (1998) proposes that the value of a social constructionist approach to qualitative marketing research is three-fold. Firstly, it brings *richness of interpretation* to the research task of making sense of qualitative social data. Social constructionist ontology sees meaning and reality as discursively constructed in social interaction through language, using text, talk, images, etc. Applying this ontological perspective, the research design adopted was a three-stage study that generated verbal and visual data.

The first stage was exploratory in character and consisted of focus groups that explored the 12-year-old English/Swedish respondents' perception of food advertising in various media, as well as their understanding of and relationship to the concept of healthy eating. This stage was formative, influencing the subsequent stages. It was decided to analyse the focus group 'talk' using discourse analysis (Brown and Yule, 1983; Paltridge, 2012), in order to establish the main discourses associated with food advertising shared by the respondents. In the second stage, the then 13-year-old participants constructed collages of a 'typical consumer' their own age. This stage was akin to audience profiling conducted in the advertising industry and generated visual and verbal data. It was decided to analyse the collages employing a hermeneutic approach, using a stepped process. The first initiative was to categorise the data and then develop descriptive categories in the form of labels. The researcher then wrote narrated vignettes on the basis of the collage data and the participants' verbal summaries of their 'typical consumers', in order to make visible the overall consumer profiles in something akin to *visual cultural stories* (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006).

⁸ The image of the knitting needles is from the Noun Project <https://thenounproject.com/term/textile/16466/> and is used in accordance with Creative Commons (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/us/>).

In the third stage, the then 14-year-old participants evaluated television advertisements associated with a healthy diet/healthy living by posting comments on an online discussion wall, Padlet. This was followed by a workshop where the participants designed advertisements promoting healthy eating to their own age group. The evaluative discussions of the advertisements were analysed using discourse analysis (Brown and Yule, 1983; Paltridge, 2012). The analysis of the participants' advertisements was conducted according to the principles of discourse analysis for the verbal elements (Brown and Yule, 1983; Paltridge, 2012). The visual elements were analysed using aspects of Emmison *et al.*'s (2012) approach to *visual social science enquiry*. What is more, principles of Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) *grammar of visual design* were employed in order to analyse the composite meaning made up by visual images and verbal elements. Following the completion of the third stage, the researcher conducted a discourse analysis on three television advertisements promoting a healthy lifestyle. The advertisements were analysed according to the principles of discourse analysis (Brown and Yule, 1983; Paltridge, 2012), *visual social science enquiry* (Emmison *et al.*, 2012) and *grammar of visual design* (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006).

Hackley (1998) proposes that the second value of a social constructionist approach is *preserving the integrity of what is meant by the research subject*. The researcher perceived the young participants as 'competent', employing a participant-centred approach that endeavoured to conduct the research from their perspective.

Hackley (1998) proposes a third value of the social constructionist approach in *developing of interpretative skills and sensitivity of the researcher*. The heavy involvement of the researcher throughout research design, fieldwork and analysis, makes researcher reflexivity important. The researcher has reflected upon her influence on the research using a metaphor of wearing different hats, representing how a variety of roles have influenced her research role. Hence, her '*researcher*' hat, a permanent fixture that cannot be shaken off, represents a 'composite hat' made from strands of the other hats.

The chapter addressed how the research may be evaluated. Hence, it was recognised that the evaluative criteria of *validity*, *reliability* and *generalisability* do not apply. Instead, the criteria of *deep, participant-centred insight*, *rigour of research design*, *transferability* and *authenticity* were proposed as more appropriate to this study. The discussion also dealt with the fact that the research design in the final research stage had to be re-designed to involve the use of Padlet, rather than Facebook. What is more, a small number of participants chose not to participate beyond stage 1 and so had to be replaced with new participants from the same population group.

This was not regarded as influencing the research negatively. The change of fieldwork site and the use of a synchronous approach is likely to have affected the nature of the research data generated. However, the use of Padlet and dedicated design workshops produced robust data, fit for cross-national comparison.

The next chapter presents the discourse analysis performed on the three television advertisements by Coca-Cola, Change4Life and Lantmännen.

Chapter 5 Television advertisements promoting healthy living – what is the message?

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 recognised the existence of a “new food culture” (Puggelli and Bertolotti, 2014, p. 58), with convenience foods introduced in response to time-poor lifestyles. Chapter 2 addressed the obesogenic environment, where easy access to energy-dense convenience foods is accompanied by insufficient physical exercise. The “new food culture” within the obesogenic environment introduces risk in terms of overweight/obesity, essentially presenting impediments (Bandura, 2004) to healthy living. Further, chapter 2 delivered an overview of discourses associated with food and obesity in the UK and Sweden. This chapter addresses the fourth research objective – *deliver qualitative insight into discourses employed within a small set of current television advertisements promoting healthy eating/living*. It explores *verbal* and *visual micro events* in three advertisements promoting a healthy lifestyle.

5.2 A discourse analysis of Coca-Cola ‘Grandpa – Living a Healthy Lifestyle’

Coca-Cola explains the objective of the advertisement thus: “In this 2013 advert, we showed how the lifestyle enjoyed by our grandparents – moving more, eating well, taking it easy – can be beneficial”. Coca-Cola expresses a belief in using its advertising to “emphasise the importance of energy balance and help people to make informed choices and lead active, healthy lifestyles” (Coca-Cola, 2016). Coca-Cola is a *Public Health Responsibility Deal* signatory (see section 2.5.1). Their report *Choice and Information: Delivering on Our Commitments* (Coca-Cola, 2015) accounts for *Responsibility Deal* pledges already achieved and future pledges. For instance, in 2012 the company pledged to reduce the average calories per litre in their sparkling drinks range by 5% and to increase their marketing investment in no-calorie colas by 25%, to be achieved by 2014. They report that the average calories per litre were reduced by 5.3% and that marketing investment in no-calorie colas increased by 52% within the specified time-frame. It is Coca-Cola’s aim that by 2020 Great Britain will be the first country where 50% of the cola sold will be lower/no calorie. They aim to reduce the number of calories per litre further, cutting another 5% across the range by 2025 (Coca-Cola, 2015).

5.2.1 The analysis

The analysis identified 14 frames. Space constraint within the thesis meant that nine frames were selected for the analysis presented. They were selected to represent a cross-section of activities throughout the day as depicted in the advertisement and to avoid duplicated discussion. Some frames not shown are briefly referred to in the discussion (and can be watched by the reader). Each frame below is a screen-shot from the Coca-Cola 'Grandpa – Living a Healthy Lifestyle' advertisement (Coca-Cola, 2016). By scanning the QR code, the advertisement can be watched in full.



Frame 5.1: The alarm clock.

Most of the advertisement uses a split screen. This split screen introduces a *binary opposition*; *signifiers* (or *signs* [Emmison *et al.*, 2012, p. 75]) that are

arranged in pairs, but opposed to each other. In binary oppositions there is frequently an inherent hierarchy, where one item is valued more than the other. Binary oppositions can influence the way that we read an image, as well as influence our emotional and intellectual response to the image (Emmison *et al.*, 2012). In this image, we discern the binary opposition of 'now and then', but also 'difference and the same'. That which is *signified* (Emmison *et al.*, 2012) is that the 1960s man (Grandpa; decade not explicitly stated, but assumed from the advertisement's use of a 1960s hit song) leads an appropriately paced life, whereas the 21st century man (the grandson) leads a fast-paced life characterised by stress that may be damaging to his health. The concept of *time* is introduced from the beginning; the left screen displays analogue time and the right screen digital time, the latter connoting technological progress. What is more, the concept of time feeds into a theme of *brand heritage* – Coca-Cola has been around a long time and is as relevant now as it was then.



Frame 5.2: Entering the work-place.

On entering the work-place, 1960s man stops and greets a colleague, shakes hands and exchanges a few pleasantries. 21st century man has already started work – he is on his mobile phone. He does not acknowledge the person coming towards him, which may connote an impersonal, individualist society. Beck (1992, p. 87) refers to a “social surge of

individualisation”, whereby “reflexive modernisation”⁹ dissolves the traditional parameters of industrial society (increasing modernisation means less ties to a social class structure, with the emergence of individualised forms of existence). Again, the concept of *time* is apparent in that the building entrances are different. In the 21st century, a revolving door would be too slow. An automatic, sliding door provides quick access, an arrangement feeding into society’s quest for *convenience*.



Frame 5.3: The lunch-break.

This frame is associated with lunch-time. 1960s man takes a break, enjoying his home-made lunch outside on a bench. Still at his desk, 21st century man is receiving a takeaway in a paper bag (another signifier for *convenience*). His lunch is a working lunch, when to stay healthy this ought to be his personal time breaking for lunch. The concept of *time* is once again apparent in 21st century man’s felt need to multi-task to stay on top. There are strong indications towards an overall theme of *well-being*. Overly stressed 21st century man is exposing himself to health risks such as stress, high blood pressure and an unhealthy diet. In a previous scene, 1960s man is seen enjoying an apple; 21st century man is eating crisps from a bag, without lending the crisps a second glance.

Throughout the advertisement, for 21st century man there are ‘frames within frames’ or several scenes to a frame, whilst the scene for 1960s man

⁹ *Reflexive modernisation* is a concept referring to reflexivity on the part of the broad masses of the lay public, expressed for instance in a critique of scientific progress (Beck, 1992).

remains the same. This depicts the faster-paced life of 21st century man. His thermal coffee mug features throughout, first introduced in the kitchen breakfast scene. In the 21st century, coffee has become a fashion accessory in terms of its ubiquity – here it may be a symbol of the *Global Age* (Albrow, 1996), but may also be an *index*¹⁰ for mobility (Beck, 1992). Using Clarke's (2006, pp. 122-123) interpretation of Baudrillard's arguments, whereby individuals within society distinguish their self and attain social standing by acquiring and using consumer goods, 21st century man's relationship with the coffee mug may represent an index of *Consumer Society* (Emmison *et al.*, 2012). On a different note, it may simply represent a constant (providing comforting benefits associated with a hot drink) in a fast-changing society.



Frame 5.4: The evening meal.

This frame depicts two approaches to the evening meal: 1960s man has his evening meal (prepared in a casserole dish on the hob) at the kitchen table, engaging in a conversation (using eye contact) with his partner. 21st century man has a microwave meal in bed, watching television with his partner. There is a binary opposition between 'formal/orderly' and 'informal/casual'. In fact, the *Waitrose Food and Drink Report 2015* (Waitrose, 2015) claims that people's less structured lifestyles have led to physical boundaries changing within the home. Accordingly, "a new informality around mealtimes means that traditional 'eating spaces' are being replaced by new ones" (p. 7) leading to less dining room usage. Once again, there is reference to *time* and 21st

¹⁰ An *index* is a sign that has a direct connection with the thing it represents, often involving synecdoche, where a part of something stands for the whole (Emmison *et al.*, 2012, p. 75).

century man's lack thereof. His meal is a microwaved convenience meal, presumably adding value in allowing for more time to be spent with a loved one (although he is yet again involved in multi-tasking and possible distraction through watching television). This frame returns to a theme of *personal relationships* introduced in an early breakfast scene. The implication here, as in other food scenes, is that 1960's man's approach to food, food preparation and consumption of meals represents a more appropriate, healthier approach.



Frame 5.5: The moral.

Coca-Cola delivers healthy living advice in corporate colours (red and white) in their position as a *Responsibility Deal* signatory. Up to this point, the advertisement provides vicarious modelling (Bandura, 2009) of healthy living by comparing the lifestyles of 1960s man (preferred) and 21st century man (inappropriate). The last quarter of the advertisement seeks to demonstrate the relevance of Coca-Cola in a healthy lifestyle.



Frame 5.6: Down-time.

It is significant that the first visual reference to Coca-Cola enters the advertisement only three quarters of the way through it, prior to which there is no indication of the identity of the source. Coca-Cola is being enjoyed by both men when wearing relaxed clothes, so this is leisure time – no suits, hats, mobile phones or coffee mugs – instead, bottles of Coca-Cola. It seems Coca-Cola is enjoyed during times that are not stressful. It would be reasonable to propose that a viewer's processing of an advertisement for a soft drink is characterised by low involvement. Marketing theory associated with low-involvement processing of advertisements features *classical conditioning* as a key theoretical explanation. This often features a distinction between central and peripheral routes to persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) and proposes conditioned learning as one explanation for the influence of peripheral cues (Allen and Janiszewski, 1989). Consequently, images of leisure time set to cheerful music helps the viewer to associate Coca-Cola with having a good, happy and relaxed time – and an associated narrative of *happiness*.

It is also significant that 21st century man appears to be drinking from the famous Coca-Cola contour bottle (Streicher and Estes, 2015). The classic bottle is an *icon*¹¹, symbolising Coca-Cola. The bottle also signifies *brand heritage*, supported by the split screen ('now and then'). The shape of the bottle itself can be described as "iconic" – visually, people do not need the label to know that it is Coca-Cola. Experiments conducted by Streicher and

¹¹ An iconic representation is one motivated by direct resemblance; an *icon* is usually a copy of the real object (Emmison *et al.*, 2012, p. 75).

Estes (2015) found that due to its unique haptic¹² brand identity, grasping a Coca-Cola bottle whilst blind-folded facilitated participants' perceptual identification of the brand. This meaning-making feeds into a theme of *brand heritage*; Coca-Cola is a global brand and in the *Global Age*, the bottle may be an *index* (Emmison *et al.*, 2012) for the *universal* (Robertson, 1992): We can find it everywhere and wherever we encounter it, the emotional benefits/experiences that Coca-Cola provides are the same, even though the taste may be altered to suit the *particular/local* – an illustration of the concept of *glocalisation* (Robertson, 1992).



Frame 5.7: Enjoying Coca-Cola across the generations.

The split screen melts into one and 'Grandpa' can be seen walking along with his grandson in the present time. Coca-Cola features prominently within this scene. There is further application of classical conditioning in the pairing of happy smiles and Coca-Cola, with the likely intention that over time, viewers should form an association between the two. The smiles are *indexes* (Emmison *et al.*, 2012) of happiness that sit well with Coca-Cola's slogan 'open happiness' (see frame 5.8) – drinking Coca-Cola makes you happy. In 2015, the slogan even changed to 'choose happiness', possibly to reflect the increasing expectation that consumers now place on the provision of *choice*. In this frame, the theme of *social relationships* appears again, across generations. This scene is followed by four seemingly crowd-sourced photographs of 'grandpas' and their grandsons enjoying time together. It is

¹² *Haptics* refer to cutaneous and kinesthetic perceptions, such as the shape of an object perceived via the hands (Streicher and Estes, 2015).

evident that the advertisement is part of Coca-Cola's commitment to the *Responsibility Deal*; at the end it promotes no-calorie versions of the soft drink (see frame 5.9).



Frame 5.8: Open happiness.



Frame 5.9: Promotion of no-calorie cola.

Playing throughout the advertisement is 'It's not unusual', sung by Tom Jones. Coca-Cola has a long tradition of a close connection with popular music to create an association between its brand and such characteristics as youthfulness, authenticity and anti-authoritarianism through tapping genres

of rock and roll, pop and rap (Klein, 2008). The choice of 'It's not unusual' would be unlikely to create associations of the edgy kind, but may be an appropriate choice for the delivery of authenticity. The song reached number one in the UK Singles Chart in 1965 (The Official UK Charts Company, 2016) and so its choice may communicate authenticity in terms of the longevity of the brand. The longevity aspect is further reinforced by the association with Tom Jones, who is still active in the music industry some 50 years later. Klein (2008) argues that the cola corporations have consistently promoted their television advertisements as entertainment with an emphasis on storytelling, making the advertisements more similar to film than to traditional advertising. The use of an old chart hit serves to contextualise the story told in the advertisement.

Scott (1990) proposes a theory of music in advertising as being meaningful and *language-like*, calling for an interpretive approach to its analysis. According to Scott, in order to understand music in communications, music needs to be viewed as a "socially situated, communicative experience" and as such "musical responses are not biologically imbedded but are thoroughly learned" (p. 227). Consequently, communication of meaning through music is based on cultural conventions and interpretations are largely shared rather than idiosyncratic. It also means that each advertising experience for an individual is framed by all those that preceded it (Scott, 1990). This theoretical point of departure associated with the meaning of music equates well with the position accorded to the verbal and visual elements in this thesis (e.g. Hackley, 2001; Moisander and Valtonen, 2006; Emmison *et al.*, 2012).

Scott (1990) claims that music in an advertisement may perform any number of rhetorical tasks, such as supporting arguments, demonstrating claims, catching and holding attention, as well as providing a vehicle for repetition and remembrance. An advertiser's selection of visual, verbal and musical styles represents a meaningful choice from a range of possibilities. For the viewer in turn, these stylistic choices represent a sign indicative of the advertiser's character or communicative intent. Scott describes music as a "functional element in advertising", recognising that the various elements in an advertisement come to have meaning through a "peculiar sort of grammar" capable of employing words, voice, music, colour, shape and motion simultaneously, in as many ways as a "grammar in language can construct sentences from individual words" (p. 228). Advertising music itself can be informative or affective and it can denote and connote. What is more, music can structure time, simulate motion and support repetition.

The music in this advertisement performs a range of rhetorical tasks. It is catchy and serves to capture viewers' attention. What is more, the tone of the music is cheerful and so supports the theme associated with happiness.

Oakes (2007) recognises the power of *mood congruity* between the musical stimulus and the advertisement, with high congruity (match) between the mood induced by the music and the mood associated with the advertised product resulting in increased purchase intent. The fast pace contributes to the communication that 21st century man's life is fast-paced. The title of the song – *It's not unusual* – ties in with the message by Coca-Cola that the various scenes that the viewer gets exposed to are representative of life, both now and in the 1960s. In fact, at the start of the advertisement it says, in white text on a red background, “based on hundreds of stories”, in effect normalising the lifestyles. The song lyrics may also endorse the normalisation of Coca-Cola consumption behaviour (Goldberg and Gunasti, 2007). The song is an upbeat song and the fairly simple, repetitive lyrics communicate about aspects of love – “it's not unusual to be loved by anyone” (theme of *personal relationships*) – and happiness – “it's not unusual to have fun with anyone” (theme of *happiness*). Here, *musical repetition* may contribute to communication effectiveness, as research has demonstrated that the brand attitude held by the target audience may be enhanced as a result of the repetition of pleasurable music that complements the advertising message. Music has a memory-triggering element capable of stimulating remembrance of past events. The concept of musical indexicality illustrates the power of “music in advertisements to make associations with past emotion-laden experiences” (Oakes, 2007, p. 42). Consequently, it may be argued that the Coca-Cola brand message is linked with the Tom Jones song and so when hearing the song in a different context, the listener may associate it with Coca-Cola and happy times, in effect performing the rhetorical task of remembrance as suggested by Scott (1990).

5.3 A discourse analysis of Change4Life ‘Be Food Smart’

The Department of Health (2011b) describes Change4Life as a “trusted health brand that is popular and understood by those groups it engages with and seeks to influence” (its target audience is families with children aged 5-11 and adults aged 35+ [Marketing Society UK, 2010]) and promotes its use as an umbrella brand for *Responsibility Deal* partners to use.

This advertisement promotes the Meal Mixer. Change4Life (no date) describes the Meal Mixer as a “4-week plan of Smart Recipes” that assists people in cooking healthier meals from scratch. Change4Life (2013) explains the advertisement thus: “Change4Life's Be Food Smart TV advert is intended to empower people to make healthier food choices by lifting the lid on the 'hidden nasties' that are in many everyday foods and drinks and encourage people to be more mindful of what they are eating”. Hence, this advertisement represents the application of the social cognitive model

(Bandura, 2004; 2009) to the promotion of health, drawing upon some of its core determinants.

5.3.1 *The analysis*

The creative approach makes the number of advertisement frames difficult to determine, as individual ‘scenes’ are long and the “camera” zooms in and out, frequently changing its vantage point. Seven frames were selected to form the basis for the analysis, using the same rationale as for the Coca-Cola advertisement. Accordingly, scenes were carefully selected to preserve the coherence of the story and to ensure that frames particularly representative of the action were included. Each frame below is a screenshot from the Change4Life – ‘Be Food Smart’ advertisement (Change4Life, 2013). By scanning the QR code below, the reader can watch the advertisement in full.



Frame 5.10: The wake-up call.

This frame (and the advertisement as a whole) has a Foucaultian note to it. The group of Plasticine figures has been spotted by someone that they cannot see – all they can see is a hand coming through the window. The owner of the Big Hand says (in a male voice): “*Honestly, you lot. What are you putting in your bodies? Let me show you. Come on. Hold tight.*” The Big Hand taps the shoulder of one of the figures in order to get their attention/reinforce the message that they should consider what they put in their bodies, then gets hold of the sofa and whisks them away.

The scene is reminiscent of Foucault’s theory of *Disciplinary Society*, where power is applied through surveillance (Clarke, 2006, pp. 84-108). In the spirit of the *Panopticon* or the *All Seeing Eye*, the owner of the Big Hand can see them, but they cannot see him. The major effect of the Panopticon is to induce a state of conscious and permanent visibility. Foucault speaks about a relationship between *power* and *knowledge*, maintaining that expert discourses develop systems of knowledge that sustain power relations and domination in society. Consequently, surveillance identifies those people who do not follow the norm (here – do not consume a healthy diet) and discursive practices are used in order to discipline their ways. The unhealthy lifestyle of the figures consuming chips, pizza and fizzy drinks has been detected and as a consequence they need to be brought back into line (disciplined) within national dietary guidelines.



Frame 5.11: Gasps of horror.

The Plasticine figures are gender-less, although perhaps the green one is dad, the orange one mum and the cerise one a child, given that the target audience is families with children aged 5-11 (Marketing Society UK, 2010). They do not speak, but make noises – greedy noises when eating and gasps of horror when perturbed.

As for the decision to let Plasticine figures feature in the advertisement, it would be reasonable to expect that they will appeal to the 5-11-year-olds. Perhaps more importantly, using characters that are dissimilar to the intended target audience takes the focus away from them. Vicarious modelling (Bandura, 2009) using an evident membership group may lead to outright message dismissal. As previously explained, marketing research had informed the creative team that any blame for overweight/obesity was to be removed from parents. In fact, even the word *obesity* was banned from the Change4Life campaign vocabulary (M&C Saatchi, 2009).



Frame 5.12: Making the invisible visible.

The owner of the Big Hand announces: “Yuck. There are 17 cubes of sugar in that fizzy drink.” A dish containing 17 cubes of sugar is placed in front of the sofa, which leads to further gasps of horror. A change of vantage point by the camera means that the sugar cubes are now in the foreground, whilst the attention has shifted to the cerise figure with the fizzy drinks bottle, which is eyeing up the bottle uncomfortably. Referring to advertising images as part of a *system of visual rhetoric*, Scott (1994) claims that visual delivery may direct

evaluation. Here the camera angle presents the sugar cubes as large and looming, rendering them a major health threat.

This frame makes the invisible visible in Risk Society (Beck, 1992), making it possible to actually see the risk – what is normally referred to as “hidden sugar”. The owner of the Big Hand has *knowledge* – many people will have limited awareness about sugar and fat content in food and drink – and therefore *power*. He pursues an expert discourse, which perpetuates his power.

The advertisement appears to be made up of two worlds – the “Plasticine world” and the “real world”. The Plasticine figures are made of “real” Plasticine, but inhabit a world that is made up of hand-drawn furniture, food, etc. The Big Hand (belonging to a “real” human being) takes them to the “real world” as we know it. The sofa lands on a “real” wooden table, where a “real” ramekin filled with “real” sugar cubes demonstrates the sugar quantity in a fizzy drink. A visit to the “real world” finally leads to understanding (the figures “get real”) of the issues associated with sugar (and fat – a similar demonstration is given regarding fat content in pizza, where visible fat is poured into a “real” wine glass).



Frame 5.13: Sticking together.

The owner of the Big Hand makes another announcement, delivering an informational appeal in a fear-inducing manner: *“Too many hidden nasties can lead to dangerous levels of fat and sugar in your bodies that can lead to heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer.”* The Plasticine figures

have listened to the *message source* (the Big Hand), comprehended the *negative outcome* likely to result from their current lifestyle and appreciate that their well-being is *contingent upon* them *changing their behavior* (Donovan and Henley, 2010). In addition to the use of threat appeals, the advertisement uses a presentation style biased towards the emotional. Having thrown the chips, pizza and fizzy drink away, the Plasticine figures hold their arms around each other. Their body language demonstrates that they care for each other, suggesting that they are a close-knit (family) unit.



Frame 5.14: The arrival of the Meal Mixer.

In this frame, the Meal Mixer has just been delivered and the owner of the Big Hand has announced: “Let’s get Food Smart. Here’s our free Meal Mixer.” Catchy, neutral, instrumental music has started. Oakes and North (2013) maintain that the genre of background music may influence purchase behavior; in this case, behavioural change involving adoption of a new lifestyle. The genre may be described as easy-listening background music and has a simple, straightforward style, possibly fulfilling the rhetorical task (Scott, 1990) of communicating progress in the form of an easy-to-apply solution (the Meal Mixer), i.e. making behavioural change in terms of adopting a new lifestyle seem easy.

The Big Hand makes a thumbs up, as do the Plasticine figures and the dog. The thumbs up are *indexes* (Emmison *et al.*, 2012) of approval of the Meal Mixer. The response of the Plasticine figures is that of an *adaptive coping response* (Donovan and Henley, 2010) – they have accepted the message of

the source in a bid to remove the *physical threat* (Schoenbachler and Whittler, 1996) to their well-being. The characters study the Meal Mixer, which may be regarded as the 'product' (Donovan and Henley, 2010) from a social marketing perspective. The mixer empowers the characters – they get the knowledge and skills set to make healthy choices – essentially contributing towards their health-efficacy (Bandura, 2004; 2009).



Frame 5.15: The problem solution.

The Meal Mixer represents the 'problem solution' and the owner of the Big Hand explains: *"It's packed with tasty, everyday ideas."*



Frame 5.16: Enjoying a healthy meal.

Having been gently told off, things turn more light-hearted with the use of a humour appeal. The Plasticine figures are tucking into a healthy meal accompanied by glasses of water, as the Big Hand arrives and tries to help itself to a chicken drumstick from a plate. Another Plasticine figure pricks the Big Hand with its fork and the Big Hand drops the food. There are laughs all-round. The Meal Mixer has pride of place on a shelf in the background.

5.4 A discourse analysis of Lantmännen 'Together we take responsibility from field to fork'

The word 'Lantmännen' is a plural form of 'lantman', an old Swedish word describing someone living in the countryside, most likely a farmer/someone working the land. Swedish farming has a long heritage of co-operative activity – the first farmers' co-operative was founded in 1880. Lantmännen describes itself as an agricultural co-operative that wants to create value at every stage from field to fork. Their brand promise is in fact the title of this advertisement – "Together we take responsibility from field to fork" (Lantmännen, 2015).

5.4.1 The analysis

The analysis of the advertisement identified 45 separate frames. Eight of the frames were selected to form the basis for the analysis. Again, the selection was necessitated by space constraint and frames depicting key points in a day were chosen in order to deliver a coherent story. Each frame below is a screen-shot from the Lantmännen 'Together we take responsibility from field to fork' advertisement (LantmannenMedia, 2016). By scanning the QR code below, the reader can watch the advertisement in full.





Frame 5.17: Dawn.

It is dawn, start of the working day for the farmer. The concept of *time* is introduced from the start. Farm sounds can be heard – the farmer sliding the barn door open and starting his tractor.

The majority of the advertisement is set to instrumental, neutral music, which is fast-moving, as are the individual frames in the advertisement. The role of music within the overall grammar of the advertisement is that of supporting the delivery of the advertisement, in the absence of text and a voice-over until the later stages (Scott, 1990). The music holds the message together, slowing its pace when the visual element provides a detail of the action, such as an “under-water shot” showing pasta hitting a pan of boiling water or a hand-full of flaked salt being poured into a pan. In effect, the music is being used in order to emphasise the visual images, with enhanced visual attention likely to result from the music and the moving images sharing temporal patterns (Oakes, 2007).



Frame 5.18: Setting the cooking timer.

The cooking timer is set to ten minutes – a suggestion this is all the time required to cook from scratch. Time references are made throughout the advertisement in that it spans the working day of a farmer and this narrative is interspersed with key timings in a day, e.g. breakfast and tea-time. These are times when people spend family-time together and the viewer gets exposed to various scenes of *human relationships*.



Frame 5.19: Making pizza.

The advertisement is reliant on the use of *slice of life* as an advertising appeal. Here the viewer gets invited into someone's home to watch father and son make pizza. Mess is allowed, with a cloud of flour enveloping the scene. The *time* element is evident – this is *quality time*. The pizza is made from scratch – even the pizza base (using the Lantmännen flour brand). This is not a takeaway; it is the “proper thing”. This is not a carefully curated advertisement; the atmosphere is relaxed and unpretentious. The everyday clutter in a beautiful Scandinavian lived-in home can be seen, as the element of *personal relationships* is being played out within the scene.



Frame 5.20: Serving cereal.

The advertisement has a fast pace, cutting rapidly from one scene to the next. This is yet again a reference to *time* and how it passes quickly in a day. Yet for each individual scene that we witness, life appears unhurried. Here we see a girl pouring cereal and milk into a bowl (the cereal a Lantmännen brand), which is overflowing.



Frame 5.21: The pizza is ready.

The pizza is out of the oven and back on the table where it was made. The table has not been tidied up. Fresh ingredients are visible – a pot of basil, a bowl of tomatoes, etc. Elements of a Scandinavian home can be seen – curtain-less windows, rag runners on a wooden floor and so on. The colours in the advertisement are fairly muted, almost monochrome at times, creating the melancholy atmosphere often portrayed in contemporary Scandinavian films. Scott (1994) explains how advertising visuals may be used as rhetorical symbols performing a number of rhetorical tasks, such as making references to other texts. It may be argued that the advertisement delivers a form of inter-textuality in that it incorporates and re-contextualises a dialogue with other texts or the “outside” of a text (Fairclough, 2003, p. 17), drawing upon popular culture and Swedish society in general. In a sense, it can be argued that the various scenes represent a celebration of the local, “everyday” in a global world (Robertson, 1992).



Frame 5.22: The dog.

The milk from the overflowing breakfast bowl can be seen trailing down the table cloth hitting the floor, where it is tidied up by the family dog. The girl is watching calmly, clearly unperturbed by the mess. There are several *relationships* depicted: the girl and her dog; the father and son; the farmer and his land, etc.



Frame 5.23: The seedling.

It is the end of the farmer's working day. He picks up a seedling with his soil-covered fingers. The seedling is an index (Emmison *et al.*, 2012) for life,

naturalness and a promise of an abundant harvest. The soil under the farmer's finger nails symbolises heritage, goodness and the local/traditional. He looks at the seedling and smiles.



Frame 5.24: The guarantee.

The Lantmännen logo – the seedling – together with the promise of “good food from Lantmännen” (“Bra mat från Lantmännen”) form a seal of quality (an index) that certifies the food shown. The food is guaranteed reliable and safe in Risk Society (Beck, 1992), an era characterised by food scares and worries about dangerous substances in our foods. The visual message is reinforced by the voice-over’s call to action: “Keep a look out for our green seedling [referring to the logo]. Where the seedling is, you will find good food from Lantmännen.” This guarantee reinforces the brand promise of “together we take responsibility from field to fork”, delivered across a few preceding frames. The agricultural co-operative takes responsibility for the land and the quality of their produce. There is also an implied responsibility on the part of consumers for taking care of their health, but also for Swedish agriculture by buying local food, grown in Sweden. There is a joint responsibility, even dependency.

5.5 Identification of discourses

This section analyses each of the three advertisements in turn. The discussion identifies the *visual vocabulary* (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006) of each advertisement and explores how within contemporary social and cultural arrangements (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006) – the *discursive context* – they combine into *meaningful wholes* (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006) or *discourses*.

5.5.1 Coca-Cola ‘Grandpa – Living a Healthy Lifestyle’

The advertisement depicts a day in the life of the two men, providing a narrative (a storyline [Emmison *et al.*, 2012]) of the everyday. There is no talking, simply action played out like a drama (use of a slice-of-life/storytelling appeal). Some of the message is delivered as *text* and the background song has lyrics of relevance to the overall message (use of a music appeal). Consequently, the advertisement is for the most part reliant on its visual vocabulary (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). We are shown that life was simpler, easier and more sensibly paced in the 1960s. Concrete visual information (Emmison *et al.*, 2012) demonstrates how life has progressed since. Accordingly, we can see how the “props” of 21st century life – car, mobile phone, computer, sliding doors and escalators – bring convenience. However, in terms of social and cultural arrangements (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006), contemporary lifestyle characterised by stress, poor diet and a lack of exercise is portrayed as interfering with well-being.

Table 5.1 charts the discourse analysis of the advertisement. The initial analysis identified themes of potential meaning, listed in the first column as *preliminary themes*. Following further analysis, these were refined into the smaller set of *themes* in the middle column. Through further viewing and reflection, the themes were captured in six over-arching *discourses*, depicted in the final column. Using the terminology of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), these discourses represent the *meaningful wholes* that are produced by the various *visual statements* delivered in the advertisement.

Preliminary themes	Themes	Discourses
'Now and then'	Time	Discourse of time
Pace		
Time		
The adding of value (time)		
Convenience	Convenience	
Building architecture		
Mobility		
'Difference and the same'	Progress and sameness	Discourse of the universal
Thermal coffee mug	Lifestyle props	
Music		
Branding (Coca-Cola)		Discourse of brand heritage
Lifestyle (depicted in slices of life)	Healthy living versus unhealthy living	Discourse of well-being
Food/diet		
Mealtimes		
Stress		
Work versus play, relaxation		
Personal relationships	Love and belonging	Discourse of love and personal relationships
Enjoyment, happiness	Happiness	Discourse of happiness
Formal/orderly	Approach to 'the everyday'	
Informal/casual		

Table 5.1: Discourses in Coca-Cola advertisement.

The source of this advertisement message is a global soft drinks brand, the target audience a mass-market. This was in the first instance the UK market, as the advertisement was commissioned by Coca-Cola UK as part of their commitments to the *Responsibility Deal*. However, due to its availability on YouTube the audience is potentially a global mass-market. The message is predominantly emotional, delivered by a slice of life appeal and ultimately a (health) demonstration appeal, in that overall the advertisement models (Bandura, 2009) an appropriate approach to life.

Running through the advertisement, there is a *discourse of time* (use of a storytelling appeal). We are shown 21st century man's stressful, high-paced life and are told to slow down and live life at a gentler pace (use of a health appeal). This message is extended into general health advice delivered by Coca-Cola. Not only are we supposed to slow down, but also eat healthily and exercise more, whilst being reminded not to forget to enjoy life. Consequently, there is an overall *discourse of well-being*. Running parallel is a *discourse of love and personal relationships*. There is plentiful visual vocabulary of interaction with loved ones, undoubtedly an important aspect of most people's well-being. The *discourse of happiness* is another central aspect of the advertisement. Despite 21st century man's stressful life, he is happy. It would appear that Coca-Cola provides access to happiness and the slogan of 'open happiness' is delivered in the final frame. It is also possible to discern a *discourse of the universal*. Coca-Cola is a global brand using its

standing to deliver health advice, which upon reflection ought to be improbable by most people's standards. The message is reassuring in that it is allegedly based "on hundreds of stories". As such, it creates a perception that Coca-Cola is consumed more frequently than is the case, leading to a perceived norm validating Coca-Cola and encouraging consumption (Goldberg and Gunasti, 2007). In effect, it legitimises the enjoyment of Coca-Cola, which can be enjoyed "responsibly" as part of a healthy, balanced lifestyle. What is more, the advertisement is a celebration of the longevity of Coca-Cola. Visual evidence of the fact that Coca-Cola will not do you any harm is provided in the form of the vitality of Coca-Cola drinking Grandpa, now probably in his 80s, but still of a slim build and seemingly energetic. Hence, we discern a *discourse of brand heritage* as well as the *discourse of well-being*.

In analysing visual elements as text, Moisander and Valtonen (2006) refer to the use of a *visual vocabulary* and a *visual grammar*. Visual grammar would appear similar to Kress and van Leeuwen's *meaningful wholes*. On critical reflection, there is a grammatical mistake in this advertisement, as the overall message jars with what many people know about Coca-Cola and the soft drinks industry. Here Coca-Cola tries to legitimise itself as an authority on healthy living. It is likely that the advertisement is an attempt to ensure that Coca-Cola remains relevant in an obesogenic environment, where soft drinks have been singled out as an impediment (Bandura, 2004) to public health.

5.5.2 Change4Life 'Be Food Smart'

This advertisement is delivered across what appears to be two separate, co-existing worlds – the "Plasticine world" and the "real world". The Plasticine figures communicate via noises and so all *talk* is delivered via a talking head (delivering a lecture) – the owner of the Big Hand. The advertisement uses quite strikingly concrete visual information (Emmison *et al.*, 2012) in the form of fat and sugar cubes. Here visual vocabulary (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006) is instrumental in making the invisible – fat and sugar content – visible in order to deal with abstract concepts (Emmison *et al.*, 2012) such as "hidden sugar". In fact, the advertisement is doing what the Health Select Committee is obliging food manufacturers to do – display sugar content added to foods in a measure of teaspoons (BBC News, 2015b).

The message is delivered in the social and cultural arrangements (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006) of widespread overweight/obesity. Visual vocabulary (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006) of gluttony is displayed in action, complete with 'audio vocabulary' of greedy noises. The source of the message, the UK Department of Health, uses stark visual statements (Kress and van

Leeuwen, 2006) nudging (Thaler and Sunstein, 2008) the target audience to change their approach to diet. The meaningful whole (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006) delivered by the advertisement is that of being Food Smart, made possible through the empowerment brought by the Meal Mixer, the social marketing product (Donovan and Henley, 2010) assisting the development of health-efficacy (Bandura, 2004; 2009) to make healthful changes.

The advertisement deals with the challenge of communicating with two target audiences – families with children aged 5-11 and adults aged 35+ (the latter will feature in both segments). The discourse analysis process was the same as described for the Coca-Cola advertisement and is depicted in table 5.2.

Preliminary themes	Themes	Discourses
<i>Surveillance</i> <i>Visibility</i> <i>Power through knowledge</i> <i>Expert discourses</i> <i>Disciplinary Society</i> <i>“Talking head”</i> <i>Food Smart</i>	<i>Nudge</i> <i>Lecture</i> <i>Education, problem solution</i>	<i>Discourse of empowerment and responsibility</i>
<i>Nutritional content/hidden nasties</i> <i>“Real” world versus “Plasticine” world</i> <i>Risk Society</i> <i>Health facts</i> <i>Fear appeal</i> <i>Humour appeal</i> <i>Music appeal</i> <i>Primary colours/Plasticine</i> <i>Lack of recognisable spoken language</i> <i>Body language</i> <i>Family unit</i>	<i>Making the invisible visible</i> <i>Health literacy</i> <i>Emotional engagement</i> <i>Innocence, naïvety</i>	 <i>Discourse of well-being</i>
<i>Demonstration of caring</i>	<i>Personal relationships</i>	<i>Discourse of relationships and human interaction</i>

Table 5.2: Discourses in Change4Life advertisement.

In some respects, the message is very simple. The presence of the Plasticine figures and the bright colours may lend a suggestion of *child’s play*, at least signalling that this is an educational message, delivering the knowledge/skills required for behaviour change (Bandura, 2004). It is delivered as an initial, gentle telling off that paves the way for efficacious (Bandura, 2004; 2009) individuals, whose new knowledge enables the making of healthier choices virtue of the Meal Mixer (use of a health appeal). A mixture of the informational and emotional is used, employing fear and

humour appeals accompanied by a problem solution. Hence, we discern an overall *discourse of well-being*. Further, there is a *discourse of empowerment and responsibility*. The discourse is both serious (the importance of taking responsibility) and humorous (to prevent the audience from switching off). What is more, the message is delivered in the context of what appears to be a small family unit. Rather than the “Plasticine world” being a separate world, it may simply represent the “real world” packaged in such a way as to resonate with children and adults alike. The figures are displaying affection for each other and hence there is a *discourse of relationships and human interaction*, communicating the importance of caring for the health of loved ones.

5.5.3 Lantmännen ‘Together we take responsibility from field to fork’

The source of this advertisement is Lantmännen, a Swedish agricultural co-operative, the target audience a Swedish mass-market (although the message is likely to resonate more with health-literate consumers). The advertisement represents a piece of corporate advertising with the intended outcome of building the Lantmännen brand and drumming up support for local, Swedish agriculture.

This advertisement is long and fast-moving, making it rich in available discourses. It is predominantly visual with some text – the brand promise of ‘*together we take responsibility from field to fork*’ is delivered over two frames towards the end. This is supported by a voice-over encouraging the viewer to look for the green seedling of Lantmännen, essentially turning the logo into a beacon for good food. Varied visual vocabulary (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006) is delivered throughout. Consequently, there are images and action associated with agriculture – a farmer in a tractor working the land, letting the soil run through his fingers, inspecting a seedling at close hand and so on, complete with agricultural sound effects. Equally, there are shots of the produce being used as ingredients in home-cooked food. This concrete, visual information provides abstract concepts such as *goodness* and *naturalness* with tangible meaning (Emmison *et al.*, 2012).

Similarly to the Change4Life advertisement, there is an inherent educational message. However, here it is more about reminding consumers of the origin of food and showing through the use of modelling (Bandura, 2009) that a reference group of people just like them cook from scratch with fresh ingredients (use of a health appeal). In social and cultural arrangements (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006) characterised by uncertainties regarding the safety of foods (Risk Society and food scares), consumers require reassurance regarding the integrity of the food. Further, the advertisement is

set in the Swedish countryside and in Swedish homes, communicating the local/particular (Robertson, 1992). What is more, the pace in the individual scenes appears to be unhurried – an antidote to the fast pace to life encountered in contemporary society.

The discourse analysis was the same as for the Coca-Cola and the Change4Life advertisements and is depicted in table 5.3.

Preliminary themes	Themes	Discourses
Key points in a day Time Pace Family time Slice of life/family scenes The everyday Relationships – human/with household pet/with the land Life	Quality time Moments to treasure Relationships	Discourse of time Discourse of relationships and human interaction Discourse of the rustic, natural, life ‘as it is lived’ Discourse of tradition and heritage
Farming	Tradition	
Countryside Soil Crop Responsibility Lantmännen Fresh ingredients	Natural Goodness Co-operation Promise Cooking properly, cooking from scratch	Discourse of well-being
Food preparation Music Muted, monochrome colours Sweden Swedish homescapes		Discourse of the local

Table 5.3: Discourses in Lantmännen advertisement.

The visual elements in the advertisement combine in a set of visual statements that deliver a number of meaningful wholes (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006) or discourses. Compared to the Change4Life advertisement, here we get the “full story” in that we are exposed to a number of steps in the food chain. In a *discourse of tradition and heritage*, we can see the Lantmännen brand promise played out in the scenes in front of us, following the farmer’s work from the seedling through to the final stages of the food chain. The message is predominantly emotional, using slice of life appeals. We get to meet a number of individuals in their everyday life – the farmer, the father and son, the girl and her dog and the couple preparing their evening meal together. The home environments look ‘un-staged’ containing the clutter of everyday. Hence, we perceive a *discourse of*

the rustic, natural life 'as it is lived'. What is more, within every individual slice of life, we encounter a *discourse of relationships and human interaction* in that we appreciate how the farmer cares for his land, the affection that the couple show each other, the special bond between the girl and her dog and so on.

Running throughout the advertisement is a *discourse of time* – the farmer's working day, a moderate pace to life and so on. The target audience is encouraged to enjoy their food at the table and cook their food from scratch. This is at the opposite end to convenience food provided by the fast food industry. This feeds into a *discourse of well-being*. The Lantmännen logo guarantees good food that will help consumers stay healthy. By showing their support through buying the Lantmännen brand, consumers not only look after their own health, but also the viability of Swedish agriculture. This, in combination with the distinctly Swedish scenes in the advertisement, implies a *discourse of the local*.

5.6 Conclusions

This chapter has conducted a discourse analysis on three quite different television advertisements promoting healthy living/eating: that of a commercial organisation (Coca-Cola), a social marketing campaign (Change4Life) and that of a farmers' co-operative (Lantmännen). Despite their different communications objectives, all three advertisements depict a *discourse of well-being* and a *discourse of relationships and human interaction*. Further, the advertisements of Coca-Cola and Lantmännen both contain a *discourse of time* and a *discourse associated with heritage*, delivered within the genre (Fairclough, 2003) of a *drama*. The Change4Life advertisement uses the genre of a *lecture*, explicitly educating its audience. What is more, the three advertisements all deal with "the everyday". The advertisements are heavily reliant upon visual vocabulary (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006) and contain only a small amount of text/talk, with the exception of a talking head in the Change4Life advertisement.

The literature review identified that qualitative analysis of creative strategy in food advertisements is rare. What is more, few studies have investigated the visual aspects of advertisements. The analysis conducted here contributes some insight in order to plug some of these gaps. It does so by disassembling the intricate "grammar" of visuals, movement, music, text and talk associated with each advertisement. The analysis also serves to illustrate the power of the visual in the advertisements. The process of the analysis demonstrates the value that this type of exploration adds to current perception of food advertising and its potential for furthering the debate

beyond quantitative content analyses detailing the number and nature of food advertisements. Hence, by applying a critical gaze we can see that messages are multi-layered, containing a complex set of meanings. Developing young audiences' ability to engage more critically with advertising messages represents one piece in a larger puzzle of tackling the complex challenge associated with overweight/obesity. Recommendations for how this may be achieved are delivered in 10.4.3.

Despite being longer than the "standard" 30-second television advertisement (Coca-Cola 60 seconds; Change4Life 40 seconds; Lantmännen 44 seconds), the communication window is still brief. Even so, the advertisements deliver complex constructs of meaning and are dense in available discourses. The Change4Life advertisement encourages behavioural change that is supposed to be permanent – "4Life" – emphasising the relational thinking within social marketing (Hastings and Saren, 2003; Hastings and Domegan, 2014). Attitude changes that result from extensive elaboration of arguments (the central route of the ELM) are thought to be longer-lasting (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Hence, the serving of key 'bite-size' items of nutritional facts in the context of a gentle fear appeal encourages cognitive engagement with the advertising message. The use of a humour appeal and peripheral cues such as bright colours and Plasticine figures encourage elaboration of the message. The peripheral cues cater to the younger children, whose ability to elaborate issue-relevant arguments is still limited (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Hence, consecutive Change4Life campaigns will assist their development of health literacy (knowledge/skills) and construction of health-efficacy (Bandura, 2004; 2009).

The Coca-Cola 'Grandpa' advertisement employs the peripheral route to persuasion, a route appropriate to a situation where available arguments are weak and the elaboration likelihood is low (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Ostensibly, the advertisement delivers an important health message. However, the upbeat message does not and would not want to encourage too much elaboration. It is significant that Coca-Cola has chosen not to be involved with the Change4Life 'Sugar Smart' campaign (Bold and Ghosh, 2016), quite possibly because the mobile app would deliver too many uncomfortable "shoutouts" when scanning the barcodes of the standard full-sugar Coca-Cola range. The reliance upon peripheral cues makes the theory of classical conditioning especially relevant (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Allen and Janiszewski, 1989), as outlined in the analysis of the Coca-Cola advertisement previously. The eagle-eyed viewer will have noticed another "grammatical error" in the Coca-Cola 'Grandpa' advertisement. Despite allegedly promoting the low/no sugar variants (see frame 5.9), all bottles that feature in use are from the standard, full-sugar range. The red and white labels of the standard Coca-Cola range are more conspicuous than those of

Coca-Cola Light and Coca-Cola Zero (Coca-Cola Life with its green livery had not yet been launched at the time of this advertisement) and presumably serve the purpose of classical conditioning more effectively. Given the extensive creative planning invested in advertisement production, it is difficult to believe that the use of the standard Coca-Cola was an oversight. This would seem to be a breach of the key rules of the UK Advertising Codes that “advertisers should be fair by dealing honestly and truthfully with consumers” and that “advertisements must not mislead” (Advertising Standards Authority and Committee of Advertising Practice, no date, pp. 7-8). From a social marketing perspective, Coca-Cola represents *direct competition* (Hastings and Domegan, 2014) to a healthy diet. In this advertisement, however, its value proposition delivers an association between the soft drink and relaxed times of the kind that promote our well-being and happiness.

The Lantmännen ‘Together we take responsibility from field to fork’ advertisement also employs the peripheral route to persuasion. It may be described as corporate advertising for the agricultural co-operative, seeking to fulfil brand building objectives. Alternatively, it may function as reminder advertising, which if repeated frequently will remind shoppers of the various brands of the co-operative when writing a shopping list or whilst in store. Product packaging features in use throughout the advertisement, as well as being the sole focus of attention towards the end. Given that the advertisement is for foods that are generally considered healthy and that it is in some ways a celebration of Swedish agriculture, there is nothing particularly controversial about this advertisement. It could even be suggested that essentially driven by a profit-motive, Lantmännen make up a co-operative unit of *facilitators* (Bandura, 2004), operating on the boundary with social marketing and guided by such principles as striving towards ensuring the integrity of the food chain and consequently, the well-being of society as a whole (Lefebvre, 2013).

The review of the literature associated with television food advertising did not encounter any cross-national comparisons of advertisements associated with healthy eating. Although not necessarily directly comparable in their objectives, the advertisements for Change4Life and Lantmännen do have a common purpose in that they encourage home-cooking and healthy eating. There are, however, some noteworthy differences in creative approach that deserve reflecting upon. The suggestion that the Change4Life advertisement uses a simplified message in order to communicate a complex, important issue to adults and children alike has already been addressed. The advertisement is “stripped back” to its bare essentials. In comparison to the creative approach used by Lantmännen, the Change4Life advertisement may be described as decidedly ‘plastic’. The Lantmännen advertisement, on the other hand, shows the entire food chain from seedling to cereal bowl.

The narrative is complete with tractors and soil, when the Change4Life advertisement displays sterile, cartoon carrots.

Current debate surrounding food advertising is very much concerned with what is said, when it is equally important to establish what it is that is not being said, what may be absent from the conversation. It is possible that the creative approach chosen to a degree may be reflective of the discursive context at a more strategic level in the respective countries (see chapter 2 for a detailed overview). For instance, the website of the Swedish National Food Agency (2016) provides extensive information on the environment and how to make sustainable choices within all the major food groupings, as well as advice on how to cut back on food wastage. At the time of writing, these types of resources are notably absent from the UK Food Standards Agency (no date) website. It follows that the socio-structural environment (Bandura, 2004) in Sweden may provide more of a facilitating framework in order to support healthful behaviour.

The next chapter presents the first stage of the fieldwork conducted with 12-year-old English and Swedish young consumers. The research was exploratory in character and is presented as a discourse analysis of the participants' discussions around a range of aspects, including food advertising, healthy eating and food choice.

Chapter 6 Adolescent consumers' discourse around food and food advertising

6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the first fieldwork stage, when the children were aged 12. The researcher addressed the second research objective, which sought to *identify and characterise the dominant discourses in relation to food advertising/healthy eating among adolescents aged 12-14 in England and Sweden*. The analysis identified eight discourses present to varying degrees in the focus groups (see figure 6.1). The discourses of both nationalities demonstrated overlap between the topics of *food and food advertising*, *fast food and soft drinks* and *health literacy*. There was also overlap between the subject areas of *consumer socialisation*, *advertising literacy* and *scepticism towards food advertising*. A discourse associated with *food and drinks brands and retail brands* emerged with both nationalities. For the Swedes particularly, there was a discourse associated with *social consumption of advertising*, overlapping with that of *food and drinks brands and retail brands*. The Swedish findings are presented first, followed by the English.

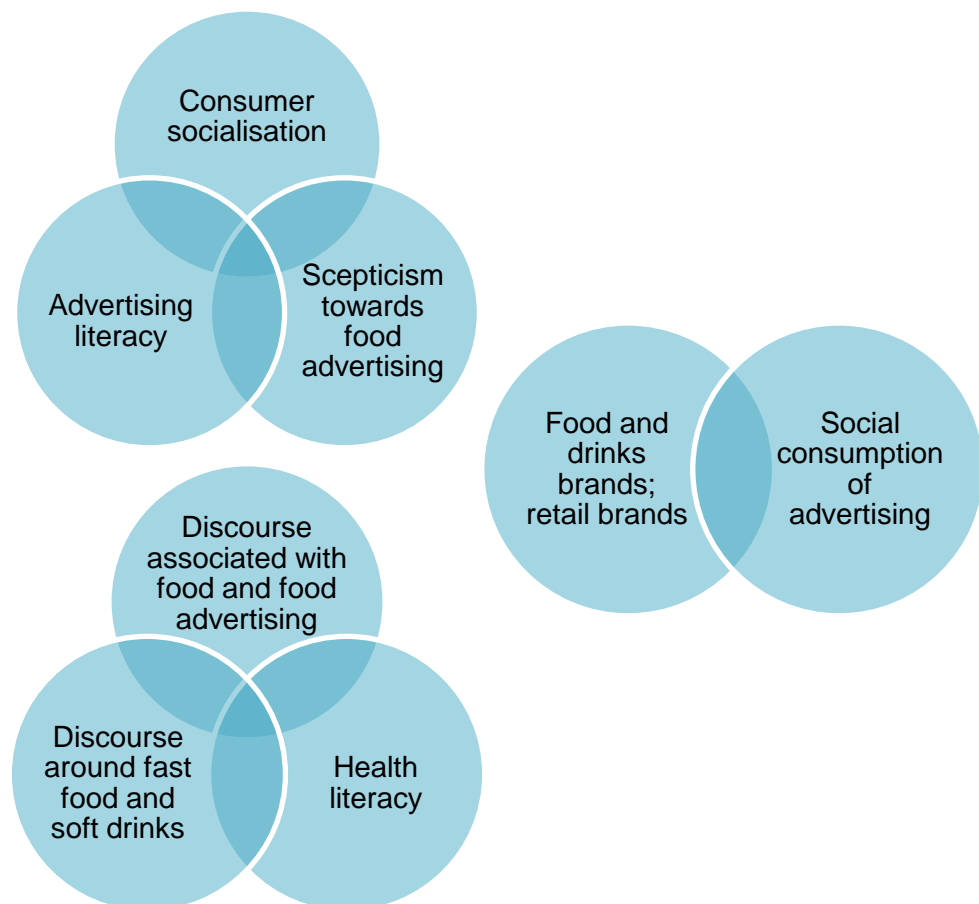


Figure 6.1: Identified discourses (Sherrington, 2016).

6.2 Findings from the Swedish focus groups

The following sections will present the findings from the Swedish focus groups. To preserve the participants' anonymity, no names will feature, simply an indication of the contributor's gender. The quotations represent the participants' voices from across the three groups, selected due to their ability to illustrate especially well aspects of the particular discourse being explored. The discourses featured in figure 6.1 will be addressed in turn.

6.2.1 Consumer socialisation

It was evident that the participants regarded themselves as *older* children. This manifested itself at various points. Consequently, in response to the researcher's question about the target market for McDonald's Happy Meal, a group of participants stated: *"It's [for] younger [children]."* Participants discussed at some length how young children are incentivised by the free toy included with a Happy Meal:

Female participant: *"My, my younger brother also thinks... He always wants these Happy Meals, just so that he will get the toy."*

Following exposure to the Kellogg's Apple Jacks advergAMES, the participants explained the purpose of such games as capturing young children, who after extended game play will pester their parents for the cereal featured in the game:

Male participant: *"Small [emphasis added] children who should get stuck in front of the game and like really love it and want to buy it and that."*

They did, however, regard themselves as *children* and maintained that certain responsibilities belong to parents, such as food shopping and providing a nutritious diet for their children:

Female participant: *"They [parents] buy the food. And then they want it to be good food."*

Male participant: *"Yes, they think about us, that we should feel well and that."*

There was evidence of fairly advanced expectations placed upon some children in terms of their role within their family. Consequently, similarly to the *conception of childhood* in Norway as outlined by Solberg (2015) (see section 2.7.2), there was reference to independent breakfast preparation, as parents tend to leave early for work. Some participants explained how they would prepare simple evening meals for themselves ahead of parents returning home, necessitated by many participants' engagement with sports

clubs in the evenings. Work and sports commitments appeared to interfere with the traditional family meal. There was a clear distinction between weekday and weekend meals; the latter providing opportunity for family meals. Despite their relatively young age, these 12-year-olds lead busy lives, for some characterised by serious commitment to sports. One girl described that she would plan and prepare the evening meal; her parents would purchase the ingredients. It was not possible for the researcher to ascertain whether this reflected the true arrangements or whether the statement was delivered in response to the particular context with an unfamiliar researcher and a group of peers with an associated eagerness to impress. However, the same participant did come across as reflective and mature and did deliver a number of statements suggesting a good level of insight into aspects associated with the study.

Using a card sorting activity, the participants negotiated the order of socialisation agents in terms of their level of influence upon the participants' choice of food. Table 6.1 presents the findings from each focus group in terms of the least influential through to the most influential socialisation agent.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Family •School •Food shop •Friends •Print advertising •Television advertising •"Something else" •The internet •SMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Family •School •Friends •Food shop •Television advertising •Print advertising <u>and</u> the internet •"Something else" •SMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Family •School •Food shop •"Something else" •Friends •Television advertising •Print advertising •The internet •SMS

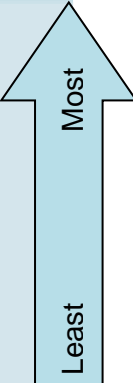


Table 6.1¹³: Order of perceived importance of socialisation agents (Sherrington, 2016).

The findings from the groups were remarkably similar in that all groups considered family most important, followed by school. Studies reported in the literature have not investigated the same extensive range of socialisation agents. However, parents and school emerged as most important in focus

¹³ There were 9 boys in group 1; 6 boys and 4 girls in group 2; 7 girls in group 3.

groups with 13-15-year-olds in Hong Kong (Chan *et al.*, 2009b). Other studies with adolescents in Hong Kong (Chan and Tsang, 2011) and in Denmark and Hong Kong (Chan *et al.*, 2011a) also confirmed parents' importance. In the present study, food shop and friends featured among the top three, four or five positions. Television advertising was generally considered more influential than print advertising, whereas new media were deemed least influential. Concerning print advertising, participants indicated that they did not tend to read newspapers. Printed media such as magazines also did not appear to be widely accessed. However, it would appear that they paid some attention to, or at least had some awareness of, leaflets distributed by local food retailers. "Something else" was included as an option in order to capture other influential agents not identified in the literature. The participants offered a range of suggestions, such as restaurants, the fact that you may eat differently whilst on a trip or simply that a serious commitment to fitness training obliges you to eat certain foods to perform well. Elsewhere in the discussions, it became apparent that the local dental health service had provided awareness about hidden sugar present in foods and soft drinks. (There is a close relationship between the dental health service and schools in Sweden, with most children attending the same local dental practice.) One participant explained about the local dental practice:

Female participant: *"There is like this book. Like this, yes, er, the yoghurt, a particular yoghurt contains five sugar cubes... And then like Marabou chocolate and that and some juices and that. Then you can check it – 'oops, I like eat this fairly often' – that doesn't feel that good."*

Family was considered most important resulting from the closeness and situation of dependency, with the main influence being encouragement of healthy food habits:

Male participant: *"Most of the time it's your family that... you grow, you grow up in... and then you listen to what they say and... you, like, do the same thing. If they buy organic... apples, say... then there is a very big chance that I will do that too."*

School was considered influential in that the participants were recipients of the free school lunch. Friends were seen as influential within a social context, for instance when consuming a meal at a friend's house. Participants did not report that they experienced peer pressure to consume either a healthy or unhealthy diet.

Family influence related to the participants' main meals. The story was different for discretionary purchases; decisions regarding food purchases made for their own consumption were made independently of family. Here

the food shop was important. In some situations, food retailers were seen as engaging in marketing trickery:

Male participant: *“But the food shop wants, like, to trick you into buying a lot of other food too that you’ve never tried. Chocolate cereal.”*

In other situations, food retailers were seen as more trustworthy. In response to the question whether food advertising assists healthy selections, one participant responded:

Male participant: *“I mean, most of the time the food [being advertised] isn’t healthy, if it isn’t food stores like ICA and that.”*

Food retailers, especially the Swedish chain of ICA¹⁴, appeared to be top of mind and as will be seen, views on ICA were generally very positive, partly as a result of a long-running television advertising campaign.

6.2.2 Advertising literacy

The first discussion item was a print advertisement for McDonald’s Happy Meal (see appendix 1). The advertisement targeted parents and contained an image of a Happy Meal box accompanied by copy communicating a sales promotional offer – *“Buy a Happy Meal – you get another one free”*, stating the value of the offer as *“value – SEK 32”*. Accordingly, the advertisement represented *indirect influence* upon children’s consumption of fast food through an advertisement targeting parents (Hastings *et al.*, 2003). The first focus group perceived the advertisement as addressed to them (rather than their parents), which may have followed from the product being for children. The subsequent focus groups clearly articulated parents as the target audience. Despite correctly identifying the target audience, one participant offered the free toy (not featured in the advertisement) as a reason why parents should purchase and, at least partly, considered the advertisement from the perspective of the influencer/user (rather than the decider/buyer).

The participants demonstrated familiarity with brands and their advertising campaigns by spontaneously introducing slogans such as *“The taste you never forget”*, *“Mmm... Marabou”* (long-standing slogans of Swedish chocolate brand Marabou) and *“I’m lovin’ it”* (McDonald’s). These slogans and longer sections of familiar advertisements were acted out by participants, using advertising discourse, theatrical voices and song. They had expectations regarding creative aspects; food advertising had to “be fun”

¹⁴ ICA Gruppen AB is a leading player in Swedish grocery retail, focusing on food and health. ICA’s mission is: “We want to be the leading retailer focused on food and meals”. ICA’s vision is: “We make everyday a little easier” (ICA Gruppen, 2016).

or it would be disregarded. The advertisements for ICA, the Swedish chain of grocery stores, had clearly struck a chord with the participants, further explored in section 6.2.8.

Whilst some participants could speak about being influenced by advertisements resulting in a subsequent purchase, others stressed eagerly that they were not persuaded by advertising. Whilst statements of this nature did demonstrate awareness of the *persuasive intent* of advertising (Carter *et al.*, 2011), other comments suggested a still developing appreciation of the functions of advertising. These comments refer to a television advertisement for Marabou chocolate shown to the participants, where the storyline includes a horse riding on the back of a man:

Male participant: *"I don't think that they should advertise. Everyone already knows what Marabou is. I don't buy more Marabou because a horse rides on a man."*

The same participant:

Male participant: *"You don't buy it because there is an advert, you buy it because it is tasty."*

The statements demonstrate the ability to reflect upon advertisements and show scepticism regarding their role and function (hence this discourse overlaps with the discourse of scepticism addressed in 6.2.3). However, the statements are one-dimensional, referring only to the *selling intent* (Carter *et al.*, 2011), when a more advanced understanding would recognise the multi-faceted role advertising plays in for instance brand image building, reminding existing users of the brand and attempting to recruit non-users, etc. Further, accounting for the slogan used in the television advertisement shown for Arla milk– *"[Get a little] closer to nature [with milk from Swedish Arla farms]"* – some participants appeared to find it challenging to elaborate upon its meaning. One group remarked that advertisements may have little to do with the actual product being advertised (in response to the Marabou storyline involving a cowboy and a horse). The group reflected upon the reasons for this creative approach, agreeing its purpose to be to encourage people to pay attention to the message.

6.2.3 Scepticism towards food advertising

Scepticism towards advertising was shown with statements such as *"I hate advertising"* and *"tv4 shows advertising 24/7"*. The misrepresentation of reality by advertisements for fast food was met with critical comments, as was the use of premiums in McDonald's Happy Meals and cereal packets. The reference to the use of toys in cereal packets was offered as an example

of how cereal producers influence young children, as “*children are fairly easy to trick*”. The participants also recounted disappointment experienced when using certain products and how they felt that the advertisements had over-promised the merits of the products.

One participant stated:

Male participant: *“Er... When, if I see something in the adverts, food adverts or something like that, then I always, I don’t know why I do it, but I always tend to avoid buying it then.”*

Asked to elaborate, the participant explained that his behaviour stemmed from his parents’ “*nagging that you should never trust the adverts*”, as they are big, already wealthy companies eager to earn even more money. This discourse demonstrates an overlap with that of consumer socialisation and parents’ role as socialisation agents. The participant’s statement and its subsequent explanation are suggestive of the development pattern outlined by Bousch *et al.* (1994), where scepticism precedes more sophisticated knowledge structures. Accordingly, this participant acquired general attitudes concerning persuasive attempts by advertising from his parents, ahead of developing his own persuasion knowledge.

Regarding advertisements’ reflection of reality, participants stated “*they always exaggerate*” (McDonald’s/product size) and “*they tend to lie in these types of adverts*” (Arla milk/30% extra protein).

On being shown an advertisement for Arla milk with 30% extra protein positioned as a sports drink (see appendix 3), they expressed scepticism regarding the degree to which the extra amount of 30% could be guaranteed. They proposed less desirable qualities may be withheld from the advertising message, such as other added ingredients, hypothesising the presence of extra sugar. The effects of the milk were questioned, with suggestions of a short-duration surge of energy:

Male participant: *“Eer... That which... It may be 30% more, extra protein in it, but the rest can be like, er, caffeine... and a load of sugar and lots of that which in reality is really bad. It gets you going, like, for 10, 20 minutes and that. And then you have to, like, drink more and that, it doesn’t, like, help very much.”*

There were proposals of no discernible effects from consuming the milk ahead of sports training:

Female participant: *“If you, like, feel anything.”*

Female participant: *"No, I don't think that there really is a difference."*

One female participant spoke about being misled by the soft drink brand Multivitamin, the name of which suggests a health-promoting option. Her closer inspection of the nutrition content, however, revealed high sugar content:

Female participant: *"Ah, like that type of drink, the drink Multivitamin. Er, it says Multivitamin in big letters, but in reality it's just like 10% and the rest is sugar, so..."*

There were references to disappointment with product promises delivered by particular brands; participants felt the actual product experience fell far short of expectations created by advertising. One group of female participants shared a disappointment with Kellogg's Special K Red Berries:

Participant 1: *"Just this type, er, there is like one of these Kellogg's like with strawberries in it."*

Participant 2: *"Oh yes, that."*

Participant 3: *"Yes."*

Participant 1: *"And like, I thought it would be really tasty... there were not that many at all."*

Participant 4: *"And then they are like this, dried, small. In the advert they are really big, beautiful."*

Participant 2: *"Yes."*

Participant 1: *"And then you see that they are like whole and big, like this. You just 'mmm, how tasty' and then when you buy them, they are those really small, cut up."*

Participant 4: *"But it is always like that in everything that it looks like this really nice on the packaging and in the adverts and then when you get it, just... 'oh, I see'."*

The Special K Red Berries discussion demonstrates an overlap between the discourses of *consumer socialisation*, *advertising literacy* and *scepticism*. By virtue of enhanced consumer skills, the participants were able to integrate the two separate stimuli of food advertising and product trial, essentially using their experience of advertising to frame their evaluation of the cereal upon consumption (Moore and Lutz, 2000).

6.2.4 Discourse associated with food and food advertising

Several themes emanated from the discourse associated with *food and food advertising*. For food in general, there was a sensible discourse associated with the importance of eating well; in terms of performing well at school and having sports endurance. There was also commentary relevant to *food socialisation* and the *overall food environment*. On the day of the fieldwork, the school canteen served fish. One focus group confirmed that on “fish days” a non-fish alternative was offered, which was considered unhelpful by the participants. They maintained many pupils would select the non-fish alternative, when fish tends to be the healthier option and with frequent exposure to a food you can learn to like it (c.f. Wilson, 2015).

Food advertising in general met with little interest. One participant commented:

Female participant: *“You don’t tend to, like, think about food advertising. It has to, like, look fun.”*

Food producers’ websites met with similar apathy; blogs appeared more acceptable:

Female participant: *“I think that you should really read on the internet about what is healthy, like. Like perhaps read a blog that tells you about good food, perhaps. Because there are those who blog and TV tends to be quite a lot of junk food, I find anyway.”*

Asked about online gaming, the participants confirmed that they would play games, but that these tended not to be associated with food. A preoccupation with food prices, discounts and promotional offers was evident in all groups:

Male participant: *“Yes, we are members at ICA, well, Mum and Dad are, so we receive advertising every week and we get a discount and we buy that then.”*

Male participant: *“Mm, Risifrutti [pots of fruit-flavoured rice] is something that I bought a few days ago. It’s like four for ten [SEK] or something. But it’s, like, quite cheap and if you buy, like, four you get a discount.”*

In the UK, 40% of food is bought on promotion (PHE, 2015). In the absence of comparable Swedish statistics, the emphasis on (low) price in all focus groups may indicate a similar situation in Sweden.

6.2.5 Discourse associated with health literacy

The discourse associated with the category of *health literacy* was multi-faceted. Asked what constitutes a healthy diet, the participants offered a range of explanations, for instance:

Male participant: *"It... it isn't healthy food if you only eat salad and that, but it is healthy if you eat a good diet with like chicken, pasta..."*

Female participant: *"But healthy food, I think, is when you eat like this... a sensible amount and you have a lot of vegetables."*

In expressing "*a sensible amount*", this participant used the Swedish word "*lagom*", expressive of the Scandinavian "just-enough-ideal" (Johansson *et al.*, 2009, p. 47) addressed in section 3.7.1. It is interesting to note the absence of a direct English translation of *lagom*!

Male participant: *"What's in the food circle is healthy."*

Wilson (2015) recognises that in our modern food environment, foods once reserved for celebrations have become everyday commodities, with implications for over-consumption and celebratory foods losing their sense of festal joy. When the researcher grew up in Sweden in the 1970s, there was a concept of "*lördagsgodis*" – "*Saturday sweets*" – sweets were reserved for the weekend. Likewise, desserts would be served on Sundays. There was still evidence of this concept, with comments to the effect that soft drinks tend to be consumed at weekends. Hearing that English school lunches may contain a dessert, the participants were incredulous. One participant commented:

Female participant: *"I don't think that we should have that here."*

The concept of organic foods was an ingredient in the discourse associated with a healthy diet. Participants spontaneously spoke about organic foods as healthy and a preferred choice, with several mentions of KRAV labelling¹⁵ (see figure 6.2).

¹⁵ The KRAV label is Sweden's foremost environmental certification for food based upon organic requirements, fulfilling standards within animal care, health, social responsibility and environmental impact (KRAV, 2015).



Figure 6.2: The KRAV label (KRAV, 2015).

References were made to "närodlat", locally sourced food and the undesirability of extensive food miles with emissions and environmental impact. Overall, the participants were well versed with sustainable food jargon. One participant described food from abroad as "very imported" and a few expressed concern that fresh produce from outside of Sweden might have been sprayed. The value placed upon Swedish food also came through in the discourse around fast food and comments made about the Swedish fast food chain Max.

The participants were asked what unhealthy foods are:

Male participant: *"Most [food] from Max [a Swedish fast food chain] and McDonald's isn't healthy, apart from... there is salad and that and that's healthy, but yes..."*

Male participant: *"When you don't eat a varied diet, for instance just burgers and..."*

Female participant: *"Some breakfast foods like juice, cereals and that and some yoghurts."*

There was awareness that even fruit may be best consumed in moderation:

Female participant: *"But you shouldn't really eat that much fruit either, because it has a lot of fruit sugars in it."*

Responding to how important healthy eating is to them, some responses implied the absence of an immediate cause for concern, for instance:

Male participant: *"[It is] quite important. But it's probably a little bit more important for adults."*

This statement confirmed one of the barriers to healthy eating identified in the literature review; children may not perceive a sense of urgency about

personal health (Evans *et al.*, 1995; Neumark-Sztainer *et al.*, 1999; Croll *et al.*, 2001; Power *et al.*, 2010). Other responses indicated more conscious thought as to the importance of a healthy diet:

Female participant: *"It's a lot more important now when we are getting older, I think. Er... and it's important to do sports training. Er, because, poor food, you can get fat and that's bad for your heart. I don't want to get fat, anyway. I want... to have a good heart, like and live for a long time."*

Queried about their discretionary spending, commitments to making healthy choices were varied. There was evidence of "discretionary risk-takers" (Kline, 2011, p. 209) spending their money on snacking choices inconsistent with their knowledge of a healthy diet:

Female participant: *"You think about it [whether what you buy is healthy] sometimes, but sometimes it's just like..."*

Male participant: *"Sometimes you're just so hungry that you can't be bothered to think about it [whether what you buy is healthy]."*

The lack of a commitment to making healthy choices for discretionary food purchases was not true for everyone:

Female participant: *"I always think about it when I buy something. When we... when I am in the shop shopping... then I always check like... yes, is this good to eat and that, so yes, I find it very important. And I don't eat sweets and crisps or drink pop and that, either."*

Male participant: *"I buy... I would say I don't buy that much food. It's mostly my parents who do that. But if I do it, then I don't think that much about what is healthy. I think more about... I think more about the environment or what is grown locally, close by."*

Asked whether food advertising offers helpful guidance towards healthy choices, responses tended to be negative:

Male participant: *"Almost all advertising is unhealthy, [for] junk [food]."*

Female participant: *"They tend to lie quite a lot and say that this is so fantastic, it is really healthy."*

Female participant: *"Then when you check it, it's just like [blow sound – to signify empty promises or a lack of substance]..."*

6.2.6 Discourse associated with fast food and soft drinks

The McDonald's Happy Meal advertisement elicited lively discussion. All participants had experience from eating at McDonald's and were able to contribute their views. It is probably fair to suggest that this fast food giant provides adolescent consumers with the opportunity to develop and practise some of the skills required from an independent consumer. McDonald's restaurants offer a wide menu positioned around value, essentially constituting a low-risk purchase in an unpretentious environment that offers young people a meeting-place.

The participants made reference to the inclusion of a toy in the Happy Meal, the presence of which was questioned as it attracts young children and generally is of poor quality. What is more, two groups suggested that the toys may involve child labour.

The nutritional integrity of McDonald's food was called into question:

Male participant: *"It's junk food."*

One participant clarified the 'junk' aspect of the food thus:

Female participant: *"Because there is a lot of fat. And that isn't good. Er... fast food doesn't tend to be particularly healthy. It, like, depends on what it is."*

The participants also noted a mismatch between the portrayal of McDonald's burgers in advertisements and their actual presentation upon purchase:

Female participant: *"It was a... in the advertising it looks like this... layers, really nice, like this... And then when you get it, it's like squashed together..."*

One group was more favourably inclined towards Max, a family-owned chain of fast food restaurants founded in Sweden in 1968 (Max, no date), commenting that *"Max is more proper food"* [compared to McDonald's], *"Max is as Swedish as it can get"*, and so on. Even so, two of the focus groups recognised the recent launch by McDonald's of *"McWrap"*, a discussion which was accompanied by eager attempts to identify initiators and early adopters of this new offering.

Several references were made to sugary soft drinks. One focus group in particular demonstrated their awareness of sugar content in soft drinks:

Female participant: *"But, like, pop, that's really unnecessary. If you want to eat healthily, then like pop is the first thing that you should stop using, because in one of those one-and-a-half-litre Fanta bottles, there are, there are 52 sugar*

cubes.”

The subsequent discussion confirmed Coca-Cola Light as containing artificial sweeteners, which were dismissed as “*bad*”.

6.2.7 Discourse associated with brands

Brands were frequently mentioned. The activities introduced the brands of McDonald’s/Happy Meal, Arla, Kellogg’s and Marabou. The participants added further brands. The brands that featured in the discourse with an association with food and drink are shown as a “brand cloud” in figure 6.3. Several brands were for breakfast cereal (Special K, Corn Flakes, Frosties and Coco Pops), confectionary/biscuits (Marabou Non Stop, Milka, Göteborgs Ballerina and Göteborgs Singoalla), savoury snacks (OLW), soft drinks (Fanta, Ramlösa, Coca-Cola, sodastream, Loka, Multivitamin and Festis) and fast food outlets (Burger King, Subway and Max). In other words, many of the brands belonged to the ‘Big Five’ – *pre-sugared breakfast cereal, soft drinks, confectionary, savoury snacks and fast food outlets*, which are frequently portrayed in television advertising and that tend to be highly processed, energy-dense and unhealthy with powerful branding (Hastings *et al.*, 2003). These brands were not necessarily put forward as preferable by the participants, but did have a presence in their discourse. This is a significant finding in that their discourse mirrored the type of (unhealthy) products generally being advertised on television. Other than Pågen Fröjd (bread), Philadelphia (spreadable cheese) and the generic food retailer’s brand ICA, the brand cloud depicts few brands associated with core food products.

An important finding was the participants’ grasp of food retailing, especially ICA. The focus group discussions indicated that many parents did their food shopping there. ICA was top of mind when asked to offer examples of brands and overall ICA appeared to enjoy a high degree of brand trust, with several references to “*ICA’s own things*” offering dependable products. Hence, there was awareness of the concept of retailers’ own brands. Arla, the dairy brand, also appeared to enjoy brand trust with the participants.

Organic certification in the form of the KRAV label was regarded as a form of branding offering reassurance. Answering a question about the importance of brands to food shopping and whether some brands may enjoy particular trust, one participant responded:

Female participant: *“Like perhaps organic and KRAV certified and that. That’s good, because then you know that it isn’t bad things.”*

Asked whether there are any particular brands that are good at providing organic products, the same participant answered again:

Female
participant:

“Some ICA things. Their own... some are organic.”



Figure 6.3: Brand cloud of the brands featuring in the Swedish focus groups.

6.2.8 Discourse associated with the social consumption of advertising

The participants appeared universally aware of the ICA television advertisements. They explained that the advertisements were delivered as a “story”, a series of humorous instalments delivering a continuous storyline. The fact that the majority were familiar with and appreciative of these advertisements, provided further evidence that the age group does watch television and do pay attention to the advertisements. Across the media explored – print, online, mobile/internet and television – the participants only spoke in detail about television advertisements:

Male participant: *“I mostly watch TV – those kinds of ICA adverts with ICA Jerry and them.”*

Female participant: *“But, I mean, ICA’s, it’s so... They haven’t just made it into an advert. They have made it into like a story.”*

The ICA advertisements provided not only *entertainment value* on an individual participant basis. The participants were familiar with the storyline and knew the names of the characters. This type of knowledge provided a form of *talk value/social currency* to use in conversations about the advertisements and provided for social consumption of the advertisements. Hence, similarly to Ritson and Elliott’s (1995; 1999) ethnographic study explored in section 3.6.7, these adolescents consume the ICA advertisements as a form of cultural product quite independent of the products advertised (as their parents are the principal food buyers). Participants in two of the groups confirmed that they would actively seek out ICA advertisements on You Tube.

In addition to the talk value, there was evidence of another form of entertainment value provided by television advertisements – that of *play value*. Two participants in the final group, independent of each other, explained that they would play the “advertising game”. One of the participants explained it thus:

Female participant: *“But we also tend to play the advertising game. Then it works like this: That it’s like if you see an advert like this with Arla then, then they don’t tend to show the logo straight away or whatever it is straight away, but first there is usually a little film and then when that film is on you guess and the person who is right gets a point.”*

Participants’ engagement with television advertisements was evident in the collective singing of advertising slogans as well as the joint re-production of parts of television advertisements. In the second focus group, a boy and a girl spontaneously introduced an advertisement for Överskottsbolaget (a Swedish discount store that sells non-perishable food and drink). It was

evident that they had both been exposed to the advertisement on television and they took it in turns to reproduce a part of the advertisement:

Female participant: *"The price is the difference', or..." [singing the slogan]*

Male participant: *"Their slogan is 'the price is the difference', and that..."*

Female participant: *"There are always two people shopping. I mean, like if you think that this joke was... if you think that this... [interrupted by the male participant]"*

Male participant: *"[is] cheap, then you should see our prices."*

6.3 Findings from the focus groups conducted in England

The sections that follow review the English focus group findings. The discourses depicted in figure 6.1 will be addressed in turn.

6.3.1 Consumer socialisation

The focus groups were conducted in June 2013, four and a half years after the full implementation of Ofcom's restrictions on HFSS advertising (see section 3.8.2). The 13-year-old participants were aged eight when the restrictions were fully introduced.

Similarly to the Swedes, the participants saw themselves as *older* children. For instance, justifying why adults would be the primary target audience for an advertisement for innocent smoothies (see appendix 4) discussed in the focus group, a respondent referred to young children's lack of knowledge of the 5-a-day concept:

Female participant: *"Because like small children don't... they like fruit... but like they don't make the 5-a-day."*

Researcher: *"Right, so this with 5-a-day, they don't necessarily...?"*

The same female participant: *"They don't know what it is."*

The discussion also included a Ben & Jerry's ice-cream advertisement for the sub-brand Milk & Cookies containing Fairtrade vanilla (see appendix 2). All groups confirmed that the concept of Fairtrade had been discussed at school. Definitions of the concept offered by the participants varied in insight. On the whole, there was a good level of awareness and reasonable understanding of the principle:

Male participant: *“Isn’t it where the people who’ve gathered it get a fair price for what they’ve done?”*

The results from the card sorting activity where the participant rated the influence of various socialisation agents upon their choice of food are summarised in table 6.2.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Family •Friends •Food shop •Television advertising •The internet •"Something else" •School •SMS •Print advertising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Family •Food shop •Television advertising •Friends •"Something else" •School •Print advertising •The internet •SMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Family •Friends •School •"Something else" •Print advertising •Food shop •Television advertising •The internet •SMS




Table 6.2¹⁶: Order of perceived importance of socialisation agents (Sherrington, 2016).

Compared to the Swedish focus groups, there was less of an overall consensus regarding the influence of the various socialisation agents. The first two groups rated the same four items as being most important, albeit in a slightly different order. Family and friends featured prominently in all groups, confirming Ekström’s (2010) contention of the importance of family due to frequency of interaction and close relations and Gunter *et al.*’s (2005) recognition of the influence of peers during adolescence. Apart from recognising family and friends as most important, the ratings of the third group followed a different pattern. Similarly to the Swedes, the English participants considered new media to have less influence and they also did not rate print advertising as significant. The environment of a food shop and television advertising were seen as important by the first two focus groups, but less so by the third group. As for “something else”, one group spoke about their age group always opting to buy products that are cheap, whereas one group referred to aspects of word-of-mouth, essentially reiterating the influence of friends. One group referred to restaurants fulfilling a useful role in providing a form of “visual advertisement”, in effect the “actual thing”

¹⁶ There were 4 girls in group 1; 5 girls and 1 boy in group 2; 5 girls and 2 boys in group 3.

(rather than a picture) and so might function as an influence on subsequent purchase and consumption of similar food in the home environment.

All groups saw family as the most important influence. This statement illustrates the family influence particularly well:

Female participant: *"I think the main one that influences you is your family, because at the end of the day, they're the ones like you're more with and do the shopping, so they are basically the ones that influence you for what you like."*

Whereas there was evidence of a weekday-weekend dichotomy with family meals mainly eaten on Saturdays and Sundays, compared to the Swedes, the concept of a weekday family meal appeared more intact. This was, however, not always the case and, what is more, there were references to television viewing during meal times:

Female participant: *"Sometimes... well... sometimes [the eating of a family meal], but... We don't really do it that often, because like... I don't know... We do have table for it, but then... We do sometimes, yeah... but not really. Because some people... because my sister always wants to watch telly and then... yeah."*

The discussions indicated that food shopping fell into the remit of parents, with some room for negotiation available for what was purchased. Friends were regarded as important. One participant referred to friends as a *"verbal advertisement, spreading the word just talking"*. Friends appeared to have particular influence within the discretionary spending category, as depicted in this exchange between some female participants:

Participant 1: *"You know, if you are with your friends and they went to the shop and bought something and you didn't know about it and they let you have some, you start to like it and you want it. It's like... Do you know the Cadbury's Oreo bar?"*

Participant 2: *"Oh, it's gorgeous!"*

Participant 3: *"It was just like heaven! Just like heaven!"*

Participant 1: *"Everyone went back in the shop and bought it, so it's like..."*

The participants did not report perceived pressure to consume healthy foods in front of their friends. Quite the opposite, there was some evidence of pressure to consume unhealthy foods:

Female participant: *"You know when you go out with your mates, you can't buy an apple. That's why you buy crisps and sweets."*

Researcher: *"Why can't you buy an apple?"*

The original female participant: *"Cause you get bullied outside in the street."*

Elsewhere in the discussions, it was evident that discretionary purchases represented a distinct consumption occasion. Whereas family meals may be healthy, purchasing something for one's own consumption provided an opportunity to experience independence and as such, purchases represented a *"treat"*. Similarly to the Swedes, when spending their own money these young consumers can be described as "discretionary risk-takers" (Kline, 2011, p. 209).

6.3.2 Advertising literacy

The participants demonstrated developing advertising literacy and abilities commensurate with the skills set of reflective consumers (Roedder John, 1999). Accordingly, they engaged competently with the print and television advertisements for innocent and Ben & Jerry's, exploring the intended meaning of the messages. This was perhaps not surprising, given that the advertisements selected were for products relevant to the participants, making them part of the target audience.

The participants reflected upon the target audiences for the advertisements, recognising that there may be several. They commented upon the use of multiple creative strategies within the same advertisement in order to address different age groups:

Female participant: *"I think, like our age, up to... everyone really, because it's like, it's bright, but it has like the Fairtrade thing, which'll interest like older people, but it's in a fun way which will interest [a younger audience]." (Commenting on the Ben & Jerry's ice-cream advertisement.)*

Again, the discourse indicated that the participants regarded themselves as older children, in possession of insight that younger children lack. The following statement demonstrates insight around the concept of return-on-advertising-investment:

Female participant: *"They appeal to children for their adverts, so then they go and like pester like their parents to buy them, it's there, they buy it, so they make the money off them for buying it, which actually comes from the advert that was made."*

There was evidence of participants' ability to reason about different perspectives – those of the advertiser and the viewer (Roedder John, 1999).

The discussion related to perfect-looking burgers in McDonald's advertisements and their true presentation upon purchase. The participants had differing degrees of appreciation of bias and deception in advertising. One participant appeared to provide McDonald's with some degree of creative licence to entice customers to the restaurant, stressing the importance of advertising in informing people what is available for purchase. As such, the argument pointed towards the *selling intent* of advertising (Carter *et al.*, 2011). In response, another participant commented on the disappointment that may result from the item received not matching the expectation created by the advertisement and that misrepresentation of this kind should be avoided. This comment pointed to an appreciation of the presence of bias in the *persuasive intent* of advertising (Carter *et al.*, 2011) and associated negative effects that may result from the consumer feeling deceived.

Here it is relevant to reflect upon the Ofcom restriction that HFSS advertising cannot target the under-16s. The conversation about the picture-perfect burgers in McDonald's advertisements was instigated by a comment regarding a television documentary (further addressed in section 6.3.6). However, there was fairly wide-spread awareness of McDonald's advertisements, possibly following from the fact that fast food chains are able to advertise during family entertainment programmes (see section 3.8.2). The researcher is aware that McDonald's advertise their fruit bags during children's programming on ITV1. Whilst the fruit bags represent a healthy option, it is unlikely that the target audience predominantly associates McDonald's with this type of food. Instead, the fruit bag advertisements are likely to serve as reminder advertising for the McDonald's brand among a young audience and also function as a form of corporate advertising with the purpose of creating a healthy aura (Adams *et al.*, 2011) around the brand.

6.3.3 Scepticism towards food advertising

The Swedes demonstrated spontaneous scepticism, whereas the English participants appeared to require prompting in order to be reflective about the content of the advertisements. Once prompted, the 100% fruit content and the flavour of innocent smoothies were questioned and it was established that product experience was required before the accuracy of the advertising claims could be confirmed, integrating the two separate stimuli of food advertising and product trial. This represents enhanced consumer skills (Moore and Lutz, 2000), but they were not spontaneous and needed to be teased out. In the case of the Ben & Jerry's ice-cream advertisement, it was suggested that the appearance of the ice-cream may have been enhanced using computer technology:

Female participant: *"Like on that ice-cream, when it says about like the dots, you don't know whether it's been computerised to make it look like what it's not, in order to sell more, to look like more chocolate bits than is in there. It is computerised to show what it should look like, instead of what it looks like."*

Some participants were eager to demonstrate that they did not let themselves be influenced by advertising and as such there was an overlap with the aspect of advertising literacy:

Male participant: *"Cause of an ad, I wouldn't just eat... drink a smoothie."*

Some participants were surprisingly accepting and uncritical about the Kellogg's advergAMES. Several participants saw them simply as games, not fully appreciating their potential to constitute a prolonged advertisement. Whereas there were some comments that advergAMES will "trap" young children with the effect that they will want the cereal featured, there were statements confirming that it is appropriate practice for Kellogg's to provide games in a computer-orientated age. Many of the Swedish participants dismissed the advergAMES, referring to them outright as "advertising games" (without having been exposed to the term 'advergAMES' by the researcher).

6.3.4 Discourse associated with food and food advertising

The general discourse associated with food and food advertising was less rich. Evidently, there were overlaps with the discourse associated with fast food and soft drinks, as well as the discourse of health literacy. However, for this discourse the researcher was left with a list of statements indicating a lack of involvement with food advertising. There were no substantive messages emerging about food in general.

Female participant: *"But if I saw an advert about Tesco and their fruit and veg, then I might leave the room or something, because it's not good enough."*

This statement may confirm Martens *et al.*'s (2005) contention that dietary behaviour is not a strongly reasoned action among young adolescents and as such, creative and alternative approaches to healthy diet-promoting interventions are required. Another participant delivered this statement in relation to television advertisements:

Female participant: *"Suppose like people our age, if it's ice-cream they'd probably look. But if it's something like fruit stuff then they would turn away and not look at it, cause it's [not] what interests [young people]."*

Responding to why Kellogg's has a website with advergames, one participant made this suggestion:

Female participant: *"To make food sound more interesting."*

6.3.5 Discourse associated with health literacy

A range of messages emerged from the overall health literacy discourse. Invited to define the meaning of a healthy diet, the participants provided a range of explanations:

Female participant: *"Eating your 5-a-day or eating some fruit and veg a day."*

Female participant: *"To have a balanced diet of everything."*

Female participant: *"To learn when to say 'no', so if you're not hungry and you're just eating for the sake of it, then it's not a balanced diet – you've got to like learn to say 'no' to some sweets or..."*

Asked what they understand by unhealthy foods, a range of explanations were offered. McDonald's was clearly top-of-mind and promptly delivered as a one-word response by one participant. Other suggestions included:

Female participant: *"Foods with fat in is food that's bad for you."*

Female participant: *"It contains quite a lot of salt and it's like carbs. They are rich in carbs and your salt and everything, which then basically makes you pile on the pounds."*

Female participant: *"Like I think that they are tastier than healthy foods and so you want it more, but then you shouldn't have more of it. You should have healthy foods more."*

There was awareness of the current sugar debate:

Male participant: *"At the moment people are quite anti-sugar, whereas you actually need some sugar."*

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition's (SACN) (2015) recommendation is that the intake of sugar should not exceed 5% of total dietary energy for people aged two and older. The sugar referred to by SACN is *free sugars*; all sugars added to foods, plus those naturally present in fruit juices, syrups and honey. It does not include sugars naturally present in intact fruit and vegetables or milk and dairy products. The above

participant statement does not specify what type of sugar (if any in particular) is referred to, but other participants' comments suggested you do need to eat some sweets in order to obtain sugar. This explanation of the innocent smoothie print advertisement indicates that some participants did have insight regarding the difference between free and naturally occurring sugars:

Female participant: *"Like come and buy our smoothies because there's no added sugar, or, there's just natural sugars and fruit giving you your 5-a-day."*

Overall, the discussion indicated limited understanding of different forms of carbohydrates and their role in the diet. As for the importance of maintaining a healthy diet, the level of understanding and commitment varied:

Female participant: *"I suppose it is... you need to start eating healthy at this age, as if you develop problems from fatty foods now it's going to get worse when you're older. Yeah."*

Female participant: *"Very, because we're growing up."*

Female participant: *"Because you see them documentaries on TV, you see them really like big people and you don't want to end up like them."*

In one group, the discussion turned heated as to the importance of eating healthily. Some participants felt that they were being put under pressure to eat healthy food. One participant remarked that *"they've put a big push on us of this day and age to eat healthy food"* and recognised that this had not been the case for their parents. Similarly to Dixey *et al.*'s (2001) finding that despite considerable health literacy children will not be coerced into a healthier lifestyle, some statements took on a rebellious tone:

Female participant: *"The thing is now, you see the adverts with your 5-a-day and you've got to eat this and you've got to eat that. Like in science lesson, we do 'healthy eating on the portion plate' – this is how much fat you should eat, this is how much carb you should eat, how much veg and protein and dairies and stuff. It's like, they [the participants' parents] didn't have that, so why is it such a big impact on us now to have it?"*

Overall, the discussion demonstrated awareness and reasonable understanding of healthy eating, with the concept of 5-a-day enjoying all-round familiarity. Nuances of healthy foods, such as organic certification, were absent from the discourse, with the exception of a brief mention of free range eggs. This was simply an explanation why some eggs were more expensive than others; the concept of 'free range' as such was not explored. Asked whether they found advertising helpful for identifying and knowing

about healthy foods, the responses were matter of fact and the discourse demonstrated an overlap with that associated with scepticism towards advertising:

Female participant: *"There's never adverts for fruit."*

Female participant: *"If you watch advertisements, if you watch advertisements, and there's like, there's not really a lot of, er, fruit or veg adverts, because that's just the grocery things and everyone buys them. It's more like biscuits and all that when the adverts are on."*

One participant remarked that any such advertising would need to be *"presented in like a fun way"* in order for children to pay attention and then ask their parents to purchase.

6.3.6 Discourse associated with fast food and soft drinks

This discourse dealt predominantly with fast food, with some references made to soft drinks. Much of the discussion dealt with McDonald's and featured the relationship that some of the participants had with this fast food brand, referred to as *"Mackie"* by some. When asked to what extent they make purchases for food for their own consumption away from home, McDonald's, KFC and Subway were all presented as destinations, the participants again demonstrating their status as *"discretionary risk-takers"* (Kline, 2011, p. 209). There was awareness that Subway has positioned itself as a healthier fast food alternative, although the participants recognised that not all Subway food is healthy. As such, there was an overlap with the discourse associated with health literacy.

Whilst McDonald's may have enjoyed a top-of-mind position for unhealthy food, the discourse around this fast food brand was mostly positive. Unlike in the Swedish focus groups, the stronger term of *"junk food"* never featured. In common with Kline's (2010) argument that since much advertising creates awareness through affective means by establishing a liking for the brand making scepticism and persuasion knowledge less relevant, here we may be witnessing an emotional attachment to McDonald's that cannot be dislodged by knowledge of questionable nutritional credentials. As evidenced by this statement, McDonald's was seen to deliver more than great-tasting food, but also a social destination:

Female participant: *"Because... it's the taste to McDonald's and it's nice, everybody eats it. So that's like basically at the end of the day how McDonald's make most of their money, from us children actually going to McDonald's, because"*

they like the food and on the adverts, they appeal to us more than they would an adult because, you know, children have got to go out with their friends and then go 'oh, let's go to McDonald's'."

The discourse around fast food overlapped with that of scepticism towards food advertising. One participant shared her insight gained from a documentary about fast food advertising:

Female participant: *"I know this, because there's, because I watched a programme about it and there is such things as like 'food artists'. And then someone had gone to McDonald's and bought a burger and when he looked at it, on the advertisement it didn't look anything like it, it just looked like someone had just, you know, thrown all the ingredients on it. But on the advertisement it was all neatly set out to look like it had everything on it. And then when you grab it, it's not."*

6.3.7 Discourse associated with brands

The researcher introduced the brands of innocent, Ben & Jerry's and Kellogg's through the focus group activities. The participants added further brands; those associated with food and drink are visualised as a "brand cloud" in figure 6.4. Similarly to the Swedish focus groups, most brands were for breakfast cereal (Rice Krispies, Coco Pops, Honey Pops, Corn Flakes, Weetabix), confectionary/ice-cream (Ben & Jerry's Baked Alaska, Magnum, Galaxy, Cadbury, Dairy Milk, Cadbury's Dairy Milk Oreo), savoury snacks (Bachelor's Super Noodles), soft drinks (Coca-Cola, Seven Up, Ribena, Evian) and fast food outlets (McDonald's, KFC, Subway) and so could be categorised into the 'Big Five' (Hastings *et al.*, 2003). As in the case of the Swedes, the participants' discourse reflected the type of products that are heavily advertised on television. Some of the brands were naturally occurring as part of the discourse, but many appeared to be preferred options. Additionally, a number of grocery retail brands were mentioned – Tesco, ASDA, Sainsbury's, Marks & Spencer as well as B&M (a discount retailer that also sells food and drinks).

The participants engaged in varied discourse in response to the question of whether they found food brands important. One participant spoke about brand trust in a generic sense by explaining that if you have tried and enjoyed a particular food brand, you would be more likely to try a new product carrying the same brand label. Invited to provide their favourite food brands, one participant stated:

Female participant: *"It's like the kids' ones, the kids' ones for the fruit... like*

the brand on an orange... like kiddy ones.”

This was one of few occasions when fruit formed part of the discussion!

The participants demonstrated insight into grocery retailers' own brands. The discussion provided an evaluation of the quality of own brands compared to manufacturers' brands, recognising that own brands provide good value with comparable ingredients at a lower price. One participant explained the situation thus:

Female participant: *“The reason that you pay so much for branded stuff is because you’re paying for the label, than what is actually inside the packaging.”*

6.3.8 Discourse associated with the social consumption of advertising

The use of pretend advertising voice-overs, singing of jingles and joint acting out of advertisements displayed in the Swedish focus groups did not occur in the English groups. The English focus groups generated rich data during at times lively interaction, but stayed on topic rather than roamed outside of the focus group guide by adding additional acts. A participant's mention of the Evian Roller Babies advertisement met with confirmation of enjoyment from several participants:

Female participant: *“My nan, like, it is the Evian [hesitation] water one and the babies and the roller skates [several participants joining in by stating “roller skates”]. My nan loved the advert for the sheer fact that it was funny and something you’d actually never see in real life.”*

Male participant: *“My nan had a go at them. She said that they were showing off that they could move their legs.”*

However, there was no evidence of social consumption of advertisements on the scale of the ICA advertisements in Sweden. Although not representing social consumption of advertising, it is worth noting that some of the participants' engagement with McDonald's seemed to provide them with the opportunity for a 'social consumption experience' around a fast food brand.



Figure 6.4: Brand cloud of the brands featuring in the English focus groups.

6.4 Discussion

The literature review presented in chapter 3 did not find any studies investigating whether Sweden's ban on television advertising targeting children under the age of 12 may affect their consumer socialisation. This study provided a unique opportunity to shed some light upon this, as the Swedish participants were aged 12 at the time of the research.

In the actual focus groups in Sweden and subsequently during the many hours spent transcribing and analysing the data, the researcher encountered confident and independent young consumers. They were able to engage in an informed discussion around aspects of food advertising and demonstrated unprompted scepticism regarding advertising messages. The discourse of some participants suggested enhanced consumer skills; advertisements would frame product trial and evaluations of an advertisement would be based upon product experiences. As would be expected, their understanding of advertising was still developing – whereas clear about the selling intent of advertising, additional advertising functions were not present in their discourse. The participants' expectations regarding creative elements of advertisements were consistently set high. Further, they demonstrated confidence in themselves as consumers; for instance by being able to make decisions regarding discretionary food purchases independently of friends.

The Swedish advertising ban concerns television advertising targeting children. In the absence of intelligence, it would be reasonable to expect that Swedish children display similar viewing patterns to British children and so watch programmes outside of children's airspace. This would mean that they are still exposed to television advertisements, albeit not targeted to them. What is more, Swedish advertising laws only cover television channels broadcasting from within Sweden.

The participants' exit questionnaires indicated a fairly wide menu of channels watched. However, a very large number indicated that they watch tv4 and almost as many watch TV6. Both are Swedish commercial television channels. tv4 broadcasts from within Sweden and so does not carry advertisements targeting children. TV6 broadcasts from London and so is bound by Ofcom's rules regarding HFSS advertising. This applies also to TV3 and Kanal 5 (Swedish Consumer Agency, 2015), but these featured on only a few exit questionnaires. These circumstances suggest that the number of advertisements targeted directly at them that these Swedish focus group participants had been exposed to, would have been at the very least tempered. Yet they appeared to be competent and self-assured consumers. There was knowledge about the advertising ban among the participants. Consequently, it was explained to the researcher that: *"You are not really allowed to show adverts, or adverts directed at children on television in*

Sweden". There was further understanding that television channels *"have found a loophole"*: *"You are not allowed to broadcast it from Sweden, so I think that they broadcast it from England or something like that."* The overall insight demonstrated by the Swedish participants would suggest that a ban on television advertising targeting children deserves further consideration when it comes to devising a range of solutions to protect children against obesity.

The focus groups produced a number of insights to inform advertising of a healthy diet to the age group. There were some commonalities between the two nationalities, but also some potentially significant differences. Both the English and the Swedish participants indicated a lack of interest in the topic of food and seemed to find food advertising for the most part boring. Whereas both nationalities appeared to have a fairly sound appreciation of what constitutes healthy/unhealthy foods and the associated importance of maintaining a healthy diet, discretionary food consumption seemed for the most part exempt from a healthy approach. Some British participants reported feeling under pressure to eat healthily, which for some seemed to result in a degree of rebellion. A parallel may be drawn here to Pechmann *et al.*'s (2003) research that found that emphasising long-term health risks associated with smoking may enhance its symbolic value and so increase adolescents' intentions to smoke. It follows that there is a need to open up a positive, less pressurised discussion around food and make it more of an exciting topic.

The exit questionnaires showed that 22 out of the 26 Swedish participants received monthly pocket money of SEK 80-500 (£6.86-42.88). The majority indicated that they save their pocket money, whilst a small number stated spending money on sweets, clothes and computer games (very similar spending targets to those reported in section 2.8.2). 11 out of the 17 English participants received monthly pocket money of £8-28. They appeared to be more prolific spenders (only two stated that they save their money) with sweets, food, drinks, clothes and games common spending targets. Although it is difficult to compare the amounts due to averages stated for age ranges in chapter 2 (see section 2.8.2), the figures above confirm the adolescents' status as an attractive market segment.

The discourse of the Swedes introduced a higher number and wider range of brands, including food and drinks brands, compared to that of their English contemporaries. The discourse of the English participants featured altogether fewer brands and, perhaps rightly so, the brands were mostly associated with food and drink. Branded fruit was commented upon in one of the English focus groups. Given the importance of branding to the age group, there may be a case for the development of an identity/branding around the concept of healthy eating.

In the Swedish focus groups, several references were made to organic foods, organic certification and the superiority of locally sourced produce. This discourse – apart from one mention of free range eggs – was absent from the English focus groups. This is surprising given Ormskirk's identity as a market town set in a countryside known as the "salad bowl of England". More importantly, this signals a potential opportunity unexplored, accompanied by possibilities for brand building. The Swedish discourse contained references to home-grown vegetables ensuring self-sufficiency during the summer months. Although not wide-spread, greenhouse cultivation featured in the Swedish participants' discourse and served in some way to confirm aspects of the "Swedish myth" outlined in section 2.7.4.

Some marked differences appeared for the two nationalities in terms of socialisation agents. The majority of the Swedish participants made frequent references to sports commitments in their spare time. There were also mentions of the importance of eating healthily to be able to perform well during physical education classes at school. Again, there were no references to physical exercise in the focus groups conducted in England. Whereas sports clubs and PE lessons appear to make up a complex network of socialisation agents in Sweden, the discussion here does not suggest that this is not important in England – it simply did not feature in the discourse and so may represent another missed opportunity for communicating the importance of a healthy diet. The *Health Survey for England (HSE)* gathers information on children's self-reported physical activity levels excluding the time spent at school. In *HSE 2012*, 14% of boys and 8% of girls aged 13-15 reported meeting current guidelines of at least one hour of moderately intensive physical activity per day and there were indications of decreasing levels of physical activity as children grow older (Health and Social Care Information Centre, 2013). (These figures exclude physical education and school sport – English schools tend to offer the opportunity of three hours of PE, as well as out-of-hours school sports in a week.)

School ranked higher amongst the Swedes in terms of its influence upon food choices. This is likely to follow from school meals being free to all school children. The Swedes also seemed able to benefit from the advice of another influential socialisation agent; that of the Swedish dental health service that actively campaigns against sugar consumption. At the time of writing, Liverpool City Council has just launched a public awareness campaign targeting hospitals, GP surgeries and children's centres. In a bid to tackle alarming levels of child tooth decay, it is the first local authority in the country to identify the sugar content of specific brands of soft drink (BBC News, 2016).

Finally, the discourse in all focus groups pointed towards the importance of the retail environment. In many cases, this simply referred to its position as

being able to showcase products and enable price comparison at the point at which purchase decisions are made, often on impulse. Throughout the focus groups, there was an emphasis upon price. This finding is significant in so far as there is a heavy reliance upon price promotion within grocery retailing. Good food (unprocessed, local, organic and free-range) tends to carry a premium price. A focus away from price promotion to making healthier options more affordable would seem sensible. In the Swedish focus groups, ICA – the Swedish food retailer – enjoyed somewhat of a cult status. Hence, it follows that grocery retailers, employing appropriate creative strategies, could fulfil a powerful role as yet another socialisation agent, promoting a healthier approach towards eating among young consumers.

6.5 Conducting focus groups with 12-year-olds

This section contains reflections on conducting research with 12-year-old participants. Given that the researcher had no previous experience doing research with children, the focus groups – in terms of their design, planning, setting up, conduct and analysis – provided important points of learning about research with young participants.

Conducting research with children is challenging even before the actual research can commence. Consequently, significant time and energy was required for recruitment of the two research sites, ethics application and securing parental and participant consent. The research methods literature highlights the aspect of *power* in research carried out with children (e.g. Westcott and Littleton, 2005). Whilst there is quite rightly concern to safeguard children's rights for their voices to be heard, it is quite possible for a researcher to feel nervous faced with a group of 12-year-olds! There is also rather a lot at stake during each hour or so of a set of focus groups, the setting up of which has required detailed planning and much effort. Not having lived in Sweden for about 15 years made the researcher worried that she had not properly kept up with the language of young people. However, the participants swayed the fears of the researcher and for the most part the groups were gregarious and co-operative with an excellent level of engagement. The point made here is simple – perhaps as researchers we have a tendency to over-estimate the power that we have in an adult-child research situation.

The researcher found that the choice of a focus group design was appropriate, as the focus groups really did deliver a good level of interaction, generating data of a depth less likely to follow from, say, individual interviews. The focus groups enabled teamwork, giving the participants the opportunity to properly engage with the task. The format of a focus group

allowed the inclusion of a range of activities that provided variety to the experience of participating. The Swedish head teachers confirmed that they considered the pupils' experience of taking part in a focus group valuable, as they had previously only completed survey questionnaires.

As for the data generated – *talk* – copious amounts resulted from the research. The process of transcription was slow – with several participants talking concurrently, it sometimes took 20 minutes to untangle the discussion and transcribe one minute's talk. Due to the nature of human speech in interaction, the resulting transcripts contain talk that is frequently imperfect in terms of incomplete statements and incorrect grammar – several quotations used in this chapter are testament to this. What is more, perhaps due to their relatively young age and some of them possibly finding some of the discussion material complex, some statements lacked coherence.

6.6 Conclusions

Figure 6.5 provides an overview of the main findings of this stage with particular relevance to the rest of the study. The findings are presented around the four dimensions of a social marketing orientation as proposed by Hastings and Domegan (2014).

In terms of the *client orientation* (Hastings and Domegan, 2014), the research delivered findings in relation to two groups of young consumers – English and Swedish 12-year-olds. Both groups demonstrated reasonable *knowledge* (Bandura, 2004) of healthy and unhealthy foods, as well as an appreciation of the importance of maintaining a healthy diet (*physical outcome expectations* [Bandura, 2004]). The discourse delivered by the Swedish participants was altogether more multi-faceted than that produced by the English participants. The discourse of the Swedes drew upon a repertoire of aspects with the potential to play an important role within a healthy lifestyle, such as organic produce and physical exercise. These aspects were absent from the English discourse. What is more, the Swedes demonstrated spontaneous criticism of food advertisements, whereas the English required some prompting.

The Swedes showed more enthusiasm around advertising by singing jingles and acting out advertisements that they were familiar with. Importantly, they appeared self-assured in their own consumption behaviour and reported feeling no pressure from peers to consume healthy/unhealthy foods, overall demonstrating more robust self-efficacy to be confident in their healthy meal choices (Bandura, 2002). Their discourse was also punctuated by a higher number of brands. In all, there was no suggestion that the consumer socialisation of the Swedish 12-year-olds had been set back by not being

targeted by Swedish television advertisements. Whilst a larger-scale study from which it is possible to generalise would be required in order to inform policy decisions, the findings reported here provide an imperative for such research to take place. Lessening the commercial pressure on children and removing some of their exposure to unhealthy food would assist in the tackling of the obesity crisis.

In terms of the *competitive orientation* (Hastings and Domegan, 2014), both nationalities showed a lack of enthusiasm around the general topic of food and that of food advertising. Importantly, both groups came across as “discretionary risk-takers” (Kline, 2011, p. 209) and discretionary food purchases appeared exempt from a healthy approach. What is more, there was some evidence of social pressure to consume unhealthy food whilst out with friends (*social outcome expectations* [Bandura, 2004]). These types of purchases appeared to be a manifestation of consumer independence, often constituting a treat. Some of the English participants were defiant here – for them, going to McDonald’s together with friends represents an important social event, an important value proposition they perhaps do not perceive as being delivered by healthier alternatives (Donovan and Henley, 2010; Hastings and Domegan, 2014). In fact, advertising stressing the long-term health consequences of an unhealthy diet may spur continued/increased consumption of such foods, as Pechmann *et al.* (2003) found in the context of adolescents and smoking.

Concerning the *collective orientation* (Hastings and Domegan, 2014), family especially, but also friends, represented important socialisation agents for both groups. For the Swedish participants, further socialisation agents featured in the discourse – school, sports clubs and the dental health service. Widespread involvement with a long-running advertising campaign of the grocery retailer ICA suggested that grocery retailers could potentially play an influential role as socialisation agents. The English participants did not appear to have the same fascination with British food retailers, but these retailers featured widely in their discourse. The fact that food is not a conversation topic suggests the importance of creating a discussion around food. Using appropriate creative strategies, food advertising should be used in order to feed into this discussion.

Finally, regarding the *creative orientation* (Hastings and Domegan, 2014), this relates directly to the aim of the thesis – to develop an in-depth appreciation of the consumer group in order to understand how to advertise healthy eating to them. Given the prominence of brands in the discourse of the 12-year-olds and the need for a higher profile of healthy eating, it would seem that emphasis upon the development of an identity around healthy foods, possibly in the form of branding, may constitute an appropriate strategy. This is further addressed in sections 9.3 and 10.4.3.

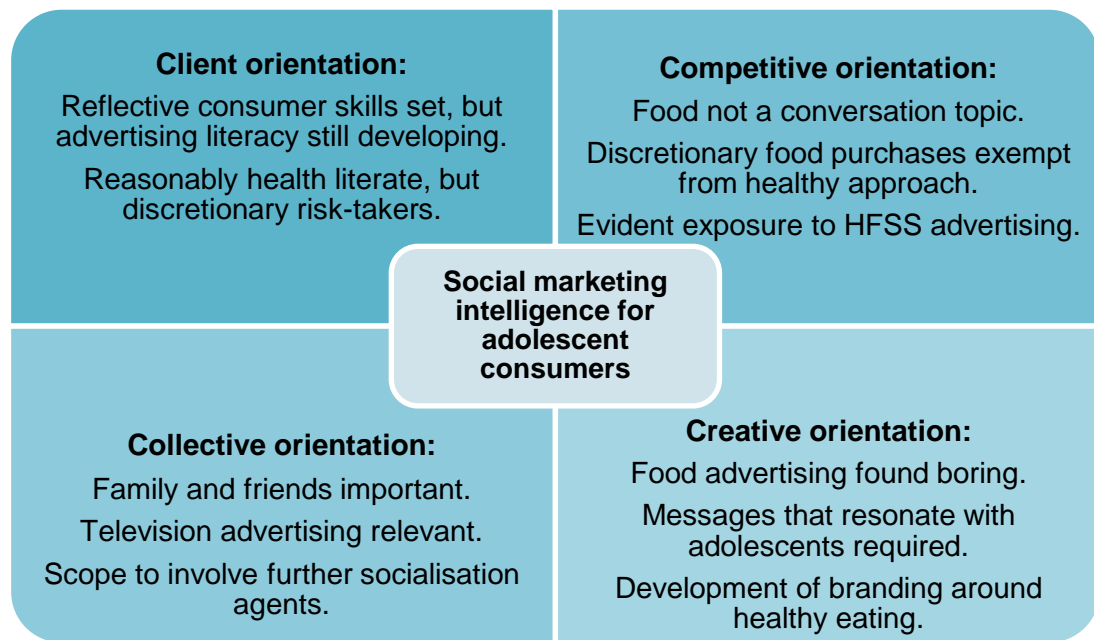


Figure 6.5: Main findings of stage 1 of the study.

The following chapter reports on the findings of the collage research carried out with the participants one year later aged 13. The collages explore the *client orientation* (Hastings and Domegan, 2014) in further detail.

Chapter 7 Adolescent consumer profiling through collages

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the second stage of the study. This stage addressed the first research objective, which sought to: *from the perspective of 12-14-year-old English and Swedish adolescents, investigate how they perceive themselves as consumers*. Essentially, the research explored the *client dimension* of Hastings and Domegan's (2014) framework of social marketing in recognition of their contention that successful marketing communication is dependent upon a well-grounded understanding of the client (consumer). Accordingly, the researcher wanted to gain insight into how young consumers perceive themselves in terms of their characteristics and what influences and motivates them as consumers. This was achieved by collage construction.

7.2 Half a dozen Swedish 13-year-olds

The findings from the three collages constructed by the Swedish participants are presented first, followed by the three collages from England.

7.2.1 Collage 1 – Maria and Philip

The first collage construction group consisted of nine boys. This group prepared a collage depicting a girl they called Maria and a boy they named Philip. The *labels* resulting from the initial categorisation of the visual and verbal language in the collage are presented in tables 7.1 and 7.2. Each collage is shown in two halves. Hence, image 7.1 depicts Maria's half of the collage and image 7.2 that of Philip's. (The true size of each half is A2.)

Table 7.1: Labels resulting from Maria's collage.

- Food – mainly “treat variety”
- Clothing and accessories
- Makeup
- Technology
- Celebrities relating to music and sport
- Money/wealth
- Animals: Cow



Image 7.1: Collage 1 Maria.

Narrated vignette of Maria:

Maria is a fairly typical 13-year-old. She enjoys food. Family meals at home tend to be healthy featuring dishes such as roast chicken. At weekends, her parents will occasionally serve comfort food such as steak, chips and gravy. The family has a greenhouse in the garden where they grow their own strawberries. Maria does know what constitutes a healthy diet, but when it comes to her own discretionary purchases she takes those as an opportunity to treat herself to ice-cream or chocolate. She takes money to school on a Friday and buys something from the school café, sometimes just a slice of toast, but occasionally there are those large, irresistible chocolate truffles available.

Like many of her friends, Maria loves fashion clothing and handbags, especially the somewhat glamorous look. She enjoys experimenting with makeup and possesses a whole repertoire of nail varnish shades. Maria is constantly chatting with her friends on social media. She takes an interest in celebrities, both associated with sports and music. When she wants to chill, she listens to music – One Direction is her favourite band. Like the sports and music stars that she idolises, she is hoping one day to be successful herself at something and earn a fortune as a result!

Table 7.2: Labels resulting from Philip's collage.

- Food – “treat variety”, convenience food, fast food
- Sport
- Gadgets/technology
- Model
- Popular culture – films
- Computer games
- Money/wealth
- Father Christmas in his sleigh



Image 7.2: Collage 1 Philip.

Narrated vignette of Philip:

For Philip, convenience foods of various kinds represent a great invention. They involve minimal preparation and mean that he can be independent and feed himself after school before his parents come home from work. Pizza is his favourite and he will heat one up in the microwave oven ahead of football training on a Monday evening. During a recent visit to England to watch Manchester United play, he enjoyed fish and chips for the first time. When spending his own money, he tends to buy chocolate. Asked about his healthy eating habits, Philip will refer to the fact that he still drinks copious amounts of milk daily. He says that this is important to his sports commitments – Philip plays football and so he needs strong legs. His family has taken him skiing in the Swedish mountains since he was a young child and Philip is now an accomplished skier.

Philip is into gadgets of various kinds: watches, torches, phones and the like. In his spare time, he enjoys watching films and playing computer games. His most important belonging is his mobile phone and it allows him to keep in close contact with his friends. Like many boys his age, Philip is also interested in girls. He has future aspirations of doing well financially, preferably as a professional footballer due to his love for the game and the huge salaries you earn just by playing football!

7.2.2 Collage 2 – Anna and Erik

The second collage construction group was made up of four boys and four girls. This group prepared a collage depicting a girl named Anna (see image 7.3) and a boy they gave the name Erik (see image 7.4). The *labels* resulting from the initial categorisation of the visual and verbal language in the collage can be viewed in tables 7.3 and 7.4.

- *Food – healthy, “treat variety”, social aspects of consumption*
- *Fashion clothing, footwear and accessories*
- *Model – aspirational*
- *Makeup*
- *Well-being*
- *Sport and personal fitness*
- *Leisure*
- *Travel*
- *Technology*
- *Personal care [products]*
- *Celebrities relating to music*
- *Friends and social relationships – in real life and virtual*
- *Pets*



Narrated vignette of Anna:

Anna is keen to ensure that her main meals are healthy and that she gets her 5-a-day. However, when it comes to spending her pocket money, Anna's motivations are different and so she will buy a chocolate bar just because she did really well in that maths test and so deserves a reward. On Thursdays, school finishes at 2 o'clock and a group of them will often go to that lovely patisserie in the town square for a smoothie and a piece of chocolate cake. In her spare time, Anna really enjoys baking. Baking allows her to be creative and forget about homework. When she bakes, she can switch off the world around her – both in a physical and virtual sense – and use her other senses. She loves to handle the cake-dough with her fingers and smell the cookies as they bake in the oven – not to mention biting into them whilst freshly made and still warm.

Anna is lucky to be part of a close-knit group of friends. When they are not together, she is in constant contact with them via social media, either on her iPad or her iPhone. Some of Anna's friends are of the furry kind – there is a cat in the family home. Anna is interested in fashion and loves shopping. She finds it great fun to put outfits together and prefers quirky combinations. Her leopard-print leggings are firm favourites and she tends to wear her Ray-Ban aviators on most days. Personal appearance is important to her and she spends a lot of time experimenting with makeup and different accessories. She dreams about becoming a model.

Like most girls her age she takes an interest in boys and, naturally, it is important to look good. Anna goes to the gym several times a week. For Anna, outer looks need to be accompanied by feeling good on the inside. She likes to pamper herself. Gym sessions are followed by long showers, using revitalising soap bought during one of her shopping trips. At home, she likes to light a scented candle with relaxing properties. Anna's favourite season is summer. For her, the very word 'summer' carries associations of sunshine and holidays, essential ingredients for feeling good. Anna is a keen traveller. She likes to document her experiences with her camera and shares her pictures on her blog. One or two pictures of her most impressive-looking home-made cakes have even made it onto there! She has been blogging for a while and has a string of loyal followers. Anna chills by listening to music on Spotify. One Direction is one of her favourite bands!

Table 7.4: Labels resulting from Erik's collage.

- Food – “treat variety”
- Sport
- [Performance] cars
- Computer games
- Technology
- Social relationships – virtual
- Fashion footwear
- Models/young woman
- Music
- Animals: Mammoth
- Pink rifle

Image 7.4: Collage 2 Erik.



Narrated vignette of Erik:

Asked what kinds of foods that he enjoys, for Erik the foods that ought to be consumed only occasionally are top of mind – oven chips and ice-cream sundaes (albeit served with fresh berries). They have learned about healthy eating in the food technology classes and he does eat the school lunch provided in the canteen. He is not widely enthusiastic about the food, but one or two of the items on the school menu are really quite tasty. In reality, he spends a minimal amount of time analysing what foods are healthy or not.

Erik's commitments lie with sports, preferably involving footballs, snow and ice. He plays for one of the local football teams, but he is also an avid spectator of league football. Like many Swedes his age, he goes skiing every winter. Erik is also curious about more extreme sports, such as ice climbing. He is also interested in fast, expensive cars. Erik spends a substantial amount of his spare time playing computer games or listening to music, if he just wants to flop. Erik's most valued possession is his mobile phone. He plays games on it, but it also allows him to keep in constant touch with his friends on social media. Like many boys his age, he does take an interest in girls. He cares about his appearance and spends time in front of the mirror every morning, making sure that his hair looks just right before heading off to school.

7.2.3 Collage 3 – Sara and Elias

There were five girls in the third collage construction group. This group constructed a collage with a girl they called Sara (see image 7.5) and a boy to whom they gave the name Elias (see image 7.6). The *labels* resulting from the initial categorisation of the visual and verbal language in the collage can be viewed in tables 7.5 and 7.6.

Table 7.5: Labels resulting from Sara's collage.

- Food - healthy and "treat variety"
- Makeup
- Fashion footwear
- Family/marriage [aspirational]
- Boys
- Travel
- Sport
- Success
- Leisure/hobbies
- Social relationships - in real life and virtual
- Model [aspirational]
- Technology
- Celebrities relating to music
- Pets
- Popular culture - film
- Well-being



Image 7.5: Collage 3 Sara.

Narrated vignette of Sara:

In response to the question about what foods that she likes, Sara will explain that she enjoys lots of fresh fruit and vegetables. However, she also rather likes sweets and anything containing chocolate. Sara loves baking cakes and spends time browsing the internet for new, scrumptious recipes. Her friends are important to her and courtesy of her phone, they are only a quick tweet or text away. Sara's family is at the centre of her existence. She has aspirations of getting married one day, start a family of her own and live in a dream house with a pool. Sara is an animal lover and enjoys caring for the family dog. Apart from baking, her spare time is filled with a wide range of interests. Monday is horse riding, Tuesday handball and on Saturday morning she plays indoor bandy.

Sara has the benefit of regular travel with her family. In winter, they alternate between skiing in the Swedish mountains and visiting more exotic, sunny locations. She also enjoys more challenging holiday experiences, such as hiking with a heavy rucksack in the Alps. Being a friend of animals, one of Sara's dream destinations is a safari in Africa to observe animals in the wild. Sara shares Anna's love of summer. For Sara, the word 'summer' is filled with emotion and evokes images of long, sunny days off school, central to re-charging her batteries and fuelling her feeling of well-being. Sara is a keen photographer and enjoys watching films and listening to One Direction. Like many girls her age, she is into fashion footwear, makeup and perfume. She is dreaming about becoming either a model or a clothes designer one day.

Table 7.6: Labels resulting from Elias' collage.

- Food – convenience food, snack foods and sweets
- Computer games
- Sport/football
- Technology
- Performance cars
- Family [celebrity]
- Girls
- Model/young woman
- Social relationships – in real life and virtual
- Popular culture/film – horror movies
- Travel
- Rebellious fashion – tattoos



Image 7.6: Collage 3 Elias.

Narrated vignette of Elias:

Elias' favourite foods are convenience foods such as burgers, chips and pizza. He also tends to treat himself to a few sweets. That with healthy eating is not something that he spends much time thinking about. He is still young and spends a substantial amount of time on the football field and so he thinks that he does not really need to worry that much about what he eats. Elias imagines himself as a professional football player when he is older. He plays in the same football team as Erik and they tend to watch football together. They are equally interested in fast cars and computer games. Both have aspirations to try out mountain climbing. Elias enjoys travelling, especially visiting far-off, exotic locations.

Elias' two most treasured possessions are his mobile phone and his computer. He values his friendships and uses social media in order to stay in touch continuously. He likes having fun and in a crowd he is often the centre of attention. Elias is an adventurous individual and he likes to stand out a little bit. In fact, once he is old enough he is considering having a tattoo. Like most boys his age he is interested in girls. Overall, he is a sincere boy and although it is likely to be a long way off, he is hoping one day to have children of his own. When nothing else is happening, Elias enjoys watching television series and films. He has a penchant for horror movies...

7.3 Half a dozen English 13-year-olds

This section presents the findings from the three collages constructed by the English participants.

7.3.1 Collage 4 – Molly and Ben

There were five girls and one boy in the first collage construction group. This group constructed a collage with a girl the group named Molly (see image 7.7) and a boy they called Ben (see image 7.8). The *labels* resulting from the initial categorisation of the visual and verbal language in the collage can be viewed in tables 7.7 and 7.8.

Table 7.7: Labels resulting from Molly's collage.

- *Food – mostly indulgent*
- *Fashion clothing, footwear and accessories*
- *Technology*
- *Makeup and body care products*
- *Popular culture – television soaps*
- *Popular culture – music and movies*
- *Adventure and wildlife*
- *Animals and nature*
- *Relationships – heart, Facebook logo, emoticons and diamond ring*
- *Money/wealth*

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- *Adventure and wildlife*
- *Animals and nature*
- *Relationships – heart, Facebook logo, emoticons and diamond ring*
- *Money/wealth*



Image 7.7: Collage 4 Molly.

Narrated vignette of Molly:

For Molly, whether to have a strawberry and banana or a mango and pineapple smoothie when meeting with friends at McDonald's represents a fairly high-involvement decision. She sees herself as somewhat of a smoothie connoisseur. When it comes to Molly's discretionary food consumption, she enjoys beautifully decorated cakes and other somewhat indulgent treats that are creatively presented and pleasing to the eye. She makes sure that she arrives nice and early at the school dining hall. If you fancy one of those gorgeous cupcakes with Smarties on top, you simply cannot hang around or they will all be gone.

Molly's eye for detail extends to her selection of outfits. Molly likes unconventional combinations, teaming a pair of denim shorts with pink Hunter wellies and a turquoise leopard-patterned bag. That bag is sure to contain everyday essentials, such as an extensive set of make-up products and Molly's mobile phone. Molly's phone offers access to her playlists of favourite music and provides the gateway to virtual socialising with her friends. She tends to watch a few of the television soaps and enjoys watching the latest movies – everyone else does and if you do not keep up with the storylines you may feel left out of conversations with friends. Molly loves adventure and wildlife. This probably follows from being brought up appreciating animals and nature through regular country walks with her parents. Molly's hopes for the future are simple – she wants to be comfortably off and share her future with a loved one.

Table 7.8: Labels resulting from Ben's collage.

- Food – “treat variety”
- Gadgets/technology
- Performance cars
- Aftershave/scents
- Brands
- Popular culture – music
- Sport – football and tennis



Image 7.8: Collage 4 Ben.

Narrated vignette of Ben:

Ben's interests lie in areas other than food, although he is partial to the odd peach and passion fruit smoothie when hanging out at McDonald's with friends. Essentially, Ben is a gadget person. His Samsung Galaxy Ace Style provides instant access to his network of friends and his music playlists. Ben is also highly motivated by brands. Using well-known brands for scents, watches, phones and so on, makes him feel good about himself and, he thinks, provides him with an elevated status within his peer group. Correctly branded trainers are a must and help him perform better in his chosen sports – football and tennis. In addition, Ben is interested in performance cars. Top Gear is his favourite television show and he does not miss a single episode!

7.3.2 Collage 5 – Holly and Jim

There were six girls in the second collage construction group. This group constructed a collage with a girl they called Holly (see image 7.9) and a boy they named Jim (see image 7.10). The *labels* resulting from the initial categorisation of the visual and verbal language in the collage can be viewed in tables 7.9 and 7.10.

Table 7.9: Labels resulting from Holly's collage.

- Food and drinks – healthy, indulgence, fast food
- Popular culture – television series, movies
- Nostalgia – the Minions
- Technology
- Social relationships – friends
- Online communities
- Animals
- Hobbies – photography
- Makeup and body care [products]
- Music, music festivals
- Fashion clothing and footwear
- Brands
- Money/wealth



Image 7.9: Collage 5 Holly.

Narrated vignette of Holly:

Holly feels that she has a good sense of what constitutes a healthy, balanced diet. Her breakfast might be natural yoghurt with granola and fresh berries. Holly's parents always prepare a healthy evening meal. She especially enjoys oven-baked salmon served on a bed of noodles and vegetables. For snacks in-between meals, Holly helps herself to fruit from the fruit basket and she has recently discovered graze boxes. However, Holly also likes treating herself to various types of indulgence foods. She frequently meets with friends at McDonald's and she loves the doughnuts and ice-cream there. Sometimes they decide to be a little healthier and go to Subway instead.

Holly is rarely apart from her friends – Facebook and her phone ensure a never-ending conversation. She is interested in photography and often shares her images on Instagram. There are times when she needs a bit of quiet time online and so she might read one of the blogs that have caught her attention. Holly is into various types of popular culture. She enjoys watching television and movies as well as listening to music. She is hoping that her parents will let her go to V-festival together with her friends next summer!

Like so many girls her age, Holly enjoys experimenting with makeup and shopping for clothes and shoes. She loves buying cosmetics at Lush and sampling perfumes at Boots – all the various scents are gorgeous! Brands are important. Holly recently got a pair of Nike Air Max. She is enjoying her increasing freedom and having a little bit of money to spend as she pleases. Holly might be at high-school, but she is clinging onto some of her younger pleasures. She thoroughly enjoyed the latest the Minions movie! Holly has always loved animals. In her opinion, the welfare of animals – pets as well as those in the wild – represents a current issue of great importance.

Table 7.10: Labels resulting from Jim's collage.

- Food and drinks – “treat variety”, fast food
- Technology
- Games
- Social relationships
- Personal care [products]
- Sports – football, formula 1
- Brands
- Sports shoes
- Popular culture – television series, movies
- Performance cars
- Hobbies – photography
- Music
- Animals: Bird of prey



Image 7.10: Collage 5 Jim.

Narrated vignette of Jim:

Jim does not spend time worrying about his diet. He does enjoy the odd sweet treat and might feel that he compensates for this by drinking soft drinks with no added sugar. For Jim, what you eat partly follows from what you enjoy doing in your spare time. He enjoys meeting with his mates at KFC or Subway. Whenever he goes to a football match, he tends to have a pie. Jim is into sport. He does cycling himself and takes a keen interest in formula 1 motor racing. Jim is interested in performance cars generally and is an avid watcher of Top Gear. With his iPhone in his back pocket, Jim is never out of range of his friends. He spends a substantial amount of time daily playing computer games, frequently meeting up with his friends on particular online servers. At times when he wants more passive entertainment, he watches movies on Netflix or simply chills by listening to Avicii. Jim is a fan of the Simpsons.

Jim's interest in photography and computers has turned into a bit of a hobby. Jim will spend hours editing his images with Photoshop. In fact, he is becoming increasingly involved with his own appearance. Noticing that NIVEA MEN sponsors the England football team and seeing some of NIVEA's advertisements clearly targeting young men, has encouraged him to start his own skin care regime. He will also ensure that his hair looks right before leaving for school in the morning. Just like Holly, Jim is into Nike sports shoes; he wears his 110's wherever he goes. He also likes wearing The North Face for all its cool associations with adventure and achievement in rugged outdoor terrain.

7.3.3 Collage 6 – Sophie and Joe

The sixth collage was constructed by two girls and three boys. The collage depicts a girl the group gave the name Sophie (see image 7.11) and a boy they called Joe (see image 7.12). The *labels* resulting from the initial categorisation of the visual and verbal language in the collage can be viewed in tables 7.11 and 7.12.

Table 7.11: Labels resulting from Sophie's collage.

- *Food and drink – celebration, “treat variety”, fast food*
- *Social relationships – virtual*
- *Technology*
- *Fashion clothing, footwear and accessories*
- *Makeup and personal care [products]*
- *Marriage*
- *Emotional well-being*
- *Photography – sharing of images*
- *Home styling*
- *Brands*
- *Animals*
- *Popular culture – music, movies*
- *Performance cars*
- *Holidays*
- *Success*

- Table 7.11: Labels resulting from Sophie's collage.*
- *Food and drink – celebration, “treat variety”, fast food*
 - *Social relationships – virtual*
 - *Technology*
 - *Fashion clothing, footwear and accessories*
 - *Makeup and personal care [products]*
 - *Marriage*
 - *Emotional well-being*
 - *Photography – sharing of images*
 - *Home styling*
 - *Brands*
 - *Animals*
 - *Popular culture – music, movies*
 - *Performance cars*
 - *Holidays*
 - *Success*



Image 7.11: Collage 6 Sophie.

Narrated vignette of Sophie:

When asked about food, for Sophie it is all about a sense of occasion, even celebration. She loves beautifully presented ice-cream sundaes that are not only delicious to eat, but a feast for the eye. Visual presentation is crucial. Sophie scans each ice-cream creation with a discerning eye – those that comply with her exacting standards will be photographed and the image uploaded and shared with her friends via social media. Only when that little exercise is completed, can she tuck in. In fact, all of this has finally made her understand the expression “to have your cake and eat it”! When she is a bit older, she imagines herself sipping glasses of ice-cold, pink champagne. For now, she loves going to Pizza Hut or McDonald’s with her friends.

Sophie has a close-knit circle of friends and she uses Snapchat and Twitter to keep in continuous touch with them. Her mobile phone is her most important possession and she simply cannot imagine what life must have been like for her parents, who did not have a mobile when they were her age. Sophie is interested in fashion and loves going shopping for clothes and shoes. Wearing brands such as Nike makes her feel really good inside.

Feelings of well-being and happiness have many sources for Sophie – the sight of daisies on a green lawn in summer, spending a holiday by the seaside, furry animals, enjoying a bag of sweets. Watching movies and listening to music – especially One Direction – are amongst Sophie’s favourite pastimes. She still takes delight in watching animations and absolutely loved watching “Turbo” in the cinema. Like many girls her age, she loves using makeup and perfume and other products to pamper herself. When she fantasises about “grownup Sophie”, she sees a married woman working as an interior designer. Diamond jewellery and her red sports car that she uses to speed between client visits are testament to her success as a business woman.

Table 7.12: Labels resulting from Joe's collage.

- *Sport – football*
- *Gadgets/technology*
- *Social relationships – in real life and virtual*
- *Branded clothing and footwear*
- *Computer games*
- *Personal presentation*
- *Popular culture – television, music*
- *Performance cars*



Image 7.12: Collage 6 Joe.

Narrated vignette of Joe:

Joe simply does not dwell upon food. He is young and active and in his own opinion does not particularly need to worry about what he eats. Most of his life revolves around sport, football in particular. He is a Liverpool supporter. Apart from really enjoying watching the Reds play, Joe is inspired by the players' enviable level of fitness and desire to win the game. Joe enjoys hanging out with his mates. If they are not meeting out somewhere, they will spend time online together playing games. Joe is a gadget person. Next to his iPhone, his most prized possessions include a PS3 games console and an Xbox. He is also into expensive watches and is fascinated by performance cars, German makes in particular. Brands are important to Joe, both for everyday clothing as well as sportswear and trainers. He thinks it is important to look smart and he is especially fussy about his hair. Joe chills by listening to music or watching television; either US police dramas or Family Guy.

7.4 A gang of discretionary risk-takers...

The purpose of the narrated vignettes in combination with the collages was to show, rather than simply tell (Hackley, 2007, p. 101). To an extent, the approach has managed to bring these young consumers to life, allowing a glimpse of who they are and what motivates them as consumers.

Given the thesis topic, the part played by food in the consumers' lives was of particular interest. However, it was important not to constrain the consumer profiles to that aspect alone, as the exploratory research in stage 1 had demonstrated the consumers' ambivalence about food. Rather, the researcher was looking for a well-rounded picture of typical English and Swedish 13-year-old consumers and it was considered that other non-food aspects emerging might provide insight of relevance to the advertising of healthy eating to the age group. A discourse surrounding food was identified and this aspect will be dealt with first.

The discourse that emerged around food communicated that food fulfils a number of functions in addition to that of providing nutrition. The first aspect to remark on is the complete lack of emphasis placed upon food by Joe, who does not consider food an important aspect in terms of who he is. Ben too, spends little time dwelling upon food. What Philip, Erik, Elias, Ben and Jim have in common is that they enjoy convenience foods and snacks. They like the taste, but also how this food fits into their lifestyle. For Philip such food means that he can share responsibility for meal times with his parents and, perhaps more importantly for a young adolescent, emerging independence. Anything too healthy, apart from milk and fresh berries, does not really enter

their discourse. For these individuals, *self-efficacy* (Bandura, 2004; 2009) required for healthy eating is of little relevance, as the very concept of healthy eating lacks saliency. Rather, their efficacious behaviour is expressed in physical activity. Out of the 12, it is only Anna who makes an explicit commitment to healthy food. This is depicted by Anna's image of fresh fruit and vegetables accompanied by the added hand-written caption "nyttig mat" [in English: healthy food] (see image 7.13). Sara too, confirms her enjoyment of fresh fruit and vegetables. Holly provides a more explicit account of her appropriate breakfast habits as well as nutritious snacks, complete with healthy evening meals. She confirms the point that emerged in the focus groups in stage 1, namely, that parents fulfil an important role as socialisation agents, with the home environment providing important *socio-structural facilitators* (Bandura, 2004) for healthy eating. This finding is in line with Kline's (2011) contention that young adolescents are still dependent upon their parents' restrictions, modelling and explanations to enable them to make their own healthy choices.



Image 7.13: Detail from Anna's collage.

The ambivalence towards food in general found in the focus groups in stage 1 was confirmed by the overall lack of emphasis placed upon the topic by these 12 consumers. This confirms one of the barriers to children practising healthy eating identified in chapter 3, namely that they do not perceive a sense of urgency about personal health (e.g. Evans *et al.*, 1995; Neumark-Sztainer *et al.*, 1999; Croll *et al.*, 2001; Power *et al.*, 2010). What the 12

consumers here have in common is that when it comes to spending their pocket money, they like to treat themselves to more indulgent options such as ice-cream and cake. This is an illustration of Kline's (2011, p. 150) argument that children's "discretionary power" is best expressed in what they purchase with their own money and that this tends not to be the healthy options. Kline maintains that despite their health literacy, most adolescents are "discretionary risk-takers" (p. 209). This behaviour may well be encouraged by advertising. In particular, Molly, Holly, Jim and Joe watch plenty of television and so are likely to be exposed to a fair amount of television advertising for food. Perhaps their behaviour is also testament to what Wilson (2015) refers to as a current situation whereby foods traditionally consumed at special occasions have lost their sense of celebratory status and so may be consumed on a daily basis. Holly in particular is quite defiant about what she sees as her consumer right to free choice. She feels that her diet is overall healthy and no one is going to tell her what to eat or not to eat. This is illustrated by image 7.14. Dixey *et al.* (2001) found similarly that children may speak fluently about healthy eating, but will not be coerced into a healthier lifestyle.



Image 7.14: Detail from Holly's collage.

Fast food places are important to Molly, Ben, Holly, Jim and Sophie. They are quick to confirm that they are indeed "lovin' it" and this refers not simply to the taste of the food, but the whole package. McDonald's provides somewhere to meet and the feel-good factor of sharing food in the company of your friends, away from the immediate gaze of parents. Although the Swedes have all been to McDonald's, their discourse does not identify fast food restaurants as meeting places. For Anna, consumption of food certainly has a social aspect to it – she likes meeting up with friends in a local

patisserie. On her collage, the image of a chocolate cake topped with cream is accompanied by the caption “fika” (see image 7.15). *Fika* is a Swedish term that denotes a coffee break, often accompanied by baked goods. However, it carries more significance than a simple coffee break. *Fika* has been described as a “[Swedish] social phenomenon, a legitimate reason to set aside a moment for quality time” (The Swedish Institute, 2014) and so the socialising may be more important than the coffee and cake, which may well be the case for Anna. These findings illustrate a complex set of *socio-structural factors* (Bandura, 2004) at play – influence from food advertising, emerging independence, peer influences – that may *inhibit* healthful eating.



Image 7.15: Detail from Anna's collage.

For Sophie, documenting visually appealing indulgent foods is not simply enjoyable, but also a strategy for accumulating social currency. By sharing her images with her friends, she is hoping for a respectable number of likes and her friends' recognition of her indulgent experiences. This may, however, not quite compete with the feelings of self-actualisation experienced by Anna when receiving acclaim for her home-made bakes on her blog. In fact, Anna and Sara's love of baking provides an outlet for their creativity and so for them food fulfils a further need on the individual level, not directly associated with nutrition. Here, the behaviour of these young consumers is driven by

outcome expectations that are *social* and *self-evaluative* in character (Bandura, 2004).

7.5 ...who are well connected...

The 12 consumers all have their own mobile phone and are part of a dedicated network of friends with a presence in physical reality, as well as in the virtual world. In essence, they are being influenced by socio-structural factors (Bandura, 2004) that are networked in character and where they are influencers themselves. On rare days when Holly has accidentally left her mobile at home, she feels bare and vulnerable at school. Holly's phone is her ultimate gadget ensuring that she has everything at her finger tips – friends, camera, music, as well as school work. Jim's mother worries about the amount of time that he spends in front of his computer. She can hear him chatting away to his friends about some game that they are playing together online. It is good to hear him laugh, but she would rather that his friends came round to the house to see Jim or that he and his friends met out somewhere.

7.6 ...and for whom brands are really quite important...

During the exploratory research in stage 1, the discourse of the Swedes was characterised by a larger repertoire of brands in comparison to the English participants. In this stage of the research, the tables had turned with the English 13-year-olds showing more dedication to brands. The fixation with brands spans the spectrum of products consumed by Molly and her friends, from technology products through to fast food. Accordingly, Ben's most valued gadget is his Samsung Galaxy Ace Style, whereas Jim feels great wearing his Nike 110's trainers and his new The North Face coat. The highlight of Sophie's week is meeting with friends at McDonald's, before heading to the cinema to watch a movie. This dedication to brands is evidence of consumer socialisation in progress. According to Roedder John (1999), as children move into the *reflective stage* (ages 11-16) they develop heightened social awareness, involving increased recognition of other people's perspectives. As is seen with some of the young consumers here, this may mean an increased reliance on brands for self-expression.

7.7 ...as are sports as well as personal fitness and well-being

Several of the consumers in both countries have a genuine interest in sports. Swedish Philip, Erik and Elias all play football as does English Ben. Several

of the group are football supporters and watch football every week. Philip even travelled to England to watch Manchester United play. Sara practices a number of sports, including horse riding and skiing. Anna has quite a serious commitment to personal fitness, as evidenced by the image on her collage of a woman in a gym accompanied with the caption “träna” [in English: training] (see image 7.16). Out of the group, Anna stands out – it is possible to read more of a distinctly personal fitness story in her collage compared to the



others. Her dedication to physical fitness is matched by her concerns for inner well-being, as can be seen in image 7.17. Consequently, her commitment to well-being is signalled by a bar of soap covered in soap suds, accompanied by the word “shower”. There is an image of a scented candle as well as the word “spa”, both indicative of the fact that Anna likes to pamper herself. In sum, Anna appears to possess the *efficacy* (Bandura, 2004; 2009) needed for an overall healthy lifestyle.

Image 7.16: Detail from Anna's collage.



Image 7.17: Details from Anna's collage.

7.8 They value experiences

As demonstrated by the aircraft with the caption “resa” [in English: travel] (see image 7.18), Anna is a keen traveller. She likes to document her experiences with her camera and shares her pictures on her blog. Other important sources of experiential consumption for the group of 12 are music, movies and food. The experiential element may be enhanced by the involvement of friends. Consequently, Holly is hoping to go to V-festival with her friends and Anna likes to go to a local patisserie with her friends for smoothie and cake.

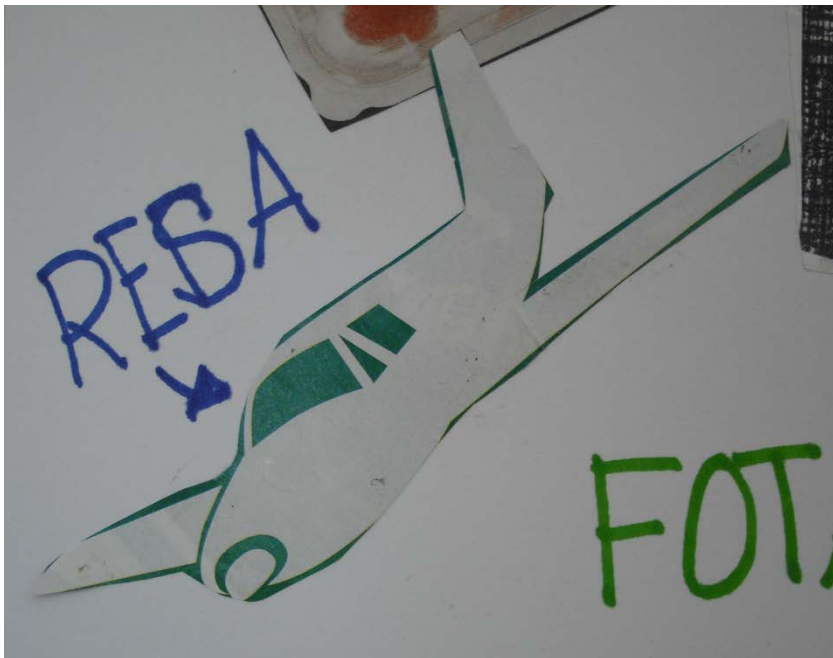


Image 7.18: Detail from Anna's collage.

7.9 Reflection on doing collage research with young participants

In line with Banister and Booth's (2005) recommendation that research conducted with children should employ creative research designs, the collage construction activity allowed the participants to express themselves using words and images. Importantly, this proved to be “productive” research – in just short of an hour the participants sketched out key aspects of what characterises a typical 13-year-old. The work format – leafing through magazines, cutting out, pasting, whilst negotiating the collage content with fellow participants – possibly allowed for more deliberation and longer engagement with the task than would have been the case with a simple focus group discussion. The outcome – a socially constructed, largely visual story – could then be read by the researcher.

Beside the generation of rich data, the research design benefited the participants in that they experienced yet another research method. Judging by their engagement and the noise, the participants relished the activity.

The researcher had not anticipated the sheer mess created by the collage construction activity. Whilst the focus groups in stage 1 could be described as “messy” in a metaphorical sense with the participants speaking at the same time making the task of transcription time-consuming, here the mess was tangible. When three collage construction groups had downed their scissors after three hours of intense work, table-tops and floors were littered with paper cuttings.

7.10 Limitations of collage research

Section 4.9 explains how this study cannot be evaluated using the traditional criteria of *validity*, *reliability* and *generalisability*. It is stated that the thesis does not make validity claims; the aim is to offer the strength of deep insight collected from the perspective of English and Swedish participants. Consequently, the research reported here provides the richness of visual images that sets it apart from more traditional consumer research. As such, its creative qualities suited to the age of the participants, coupled with the opportunity to express ideas both verbally and visually, appear to fulfil Saunders *et al.*'s (2016) requirement for *authenticity* for qualitative research.

In terms of *reliability*, chapter 4 recognises that rather than assessing whether the research project may be repeated and produce the same results, a more appropriate evaluation would be whether the research has been conducted in a systematic and rigorous manner (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). This part of the study is simply one of three carefully designed stages, all of which use different research methods. The outcome of the collage approach is of course partly dependent upon the construction material available. The researcher provided an ample supply of magazines and so on, carefully selected for their provision of a wide variety of images. Following retrospective reflection as to whether this supply of material might in fact have constrained the Swedish participants, the researcher invited the English participants to bring a magazine of their own choice. Most of the participants chose not to, which meant that the researcher's material was called upon. The overall strength of the approach, however, was that the participants had a free choice as to what images to use, rather than a pre-selected, limited set. What is more, they were encouraged to substitute words for any images that they were seeking but could not find.

Further, for all their richness and illuminating variety of content, the finished collages still only represent a “snapshot” and cannot claim to be as “real” as

perhaps an ethnographic study could be. However, collage construction provided a time- and cost-efficient approach for an individual researcher on a limited budget conducting research in two separate countries.

In line with Moisander and Valtonen's (2006) recommendation that *transferability* (rather than *generalisability*) would be a more appropriate evaluative concept, the emphasis is upon whether the results can be transferred and applied to other contexts and situations. It was reassuring to see that the finished collages, both within and across national borders, demonstrated several aspects of commonality, which seems to suggest that the approach was fit for purpose. What is more, the collages confirmed some of the findings from the exploratory research the previous year. More fundamentally, given the fast-paced, continuous change in consumer society coupled with Moisander and Valtonen's (2006) claim that our knowledge of the world is contextual, plural, contested and subject to change, it might be more appropriate to think about the transferability aspect in terms of the *nature of the findings* and the *applicability of the research approach itself* in various situations involving adolescents.

Finally, it must be recognised that the narrated vignettes were written by the researcher and unlike the discourse presented elsewhere in this thesis, they are not the first-hand voice of the children. The participants were invited to describe their consumers at the end of the sessions with the aid of the completed collages, but the length of the workshops did not allow for the participants to write consumer stories. Hence, the vignettes represent the researcher's reading of the collages as "visual cultural stories" (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006, p. 26). This reading was informed by the participants' summation of their 'typical consumers' at the end of each session, careful consideration of the visual and verbal collage content, a review of the audio-recordings of the collage construction workshops, as well as the pre-understanding collected during the stage 1 focus groups. In the absence of stories authored by the participants, the vignettes contribute an "empirically sourced narrative" distilled by the researcher from the characters socially constructed in the collages and spoken about by the research participants (Hackley, 2007; Quinn and Patterson, 2013, p. 730). The writing was guided by detailed attention to the empirical data available, but a story told first-hand by the children themselves would provide an account that would be seen as overall more reliable. This will be re-visited in 10.6, which provides suggestions for future research.


7.11 Conclusions

The research reported here addressed the first research objective, which sought to explore how young English and Swedish adolescents perceive themselves as consumers. Essentially, the research dealt with the *client dimension* of Hastings and Domegan's (2014) social marketing framework. The use of collages in combination with narrated vignettes has enabled us to see and meet with a dozen young consumers, providing more meaningful insight than is generally available through an objective assessment of various standard segmentation variables.

Despite a different focus in the first and second stages of the study, given the longitudinal design the researcher was interested to see whether some of the findings in the exploratory research would be confirmed by the findings in this stage. There was equal interest in whether signs of further consumer socialisation might be discerned. Accordingly, three aspects of the stage 1 findings were confirmed. Firstly, similarly to the discussions in the exploratory focus groups, the participants demonstrated limited engagement with food overall. Secondly, the social experience aspects associated with visiting McDonald's with friends were yet again visible. Thirdly, family still came across as an important socialisation agent, although less so than in stage 1. This may be explained by the fact that in this stage the focus was firmly on the participants and they were not asked to consider aspects of family. However, another explanation would be that the participants are slowly becoming more independent from their families. If this is so, then this would be a sign of further consumer socialisation. The participants and the 12 socially constructed 13-year-olds can be described as self-confident and demanding experience-seekers. They are gregarious and stick up for their right to consume fast food. These characteristics can be seen to be indicative of a critical, analytical approach to consumption (Roedder John, 1999) and so may suggest further consumer socialisation.

The analysis found commonalities as well as differences across the two nationalities. An overview of the main findings is presented in table 7.13. It became clear that food fulfils a range of functions for this group of 13-year-olds. Firstly, for some of the male individuals, food is all but absent from their discourse, seemingly suffocated by their devotion to sports and computer games. In this "silent" position, for this group of fairly privileged 13-year-olds food is taken for granted and its role is little more than to provide nutrition. It would appear that the male members of the group have little overt engagement with healthy eating. For the female 13-year-olds, however, healthy foods have a role to play and so are tied up with an emphasis on personal well-being, which is explicit for Anna, Sara and Holly. Food also fulfils an important role as an accompaniment to social interaction in that this group of young consumers enjoy going to McDonald's together (or a

patisserie). They do enjoy this type of food and so fast food and food of the “treat variety” offer valued taste experiences. What is more, the fast food concept offers a ticket to a degree of independence from adults. Taken together, the *social experience*, the *taste experience* and the *offer of a degree of independence* deliver benefits that present direct competition to social marketing initiatives that seek to instil healthy eating behaviour (Hastings and Domegan, 2014). There was an important difference here between the two nationalities. Fast food restaurants featured prominently in the discourse of the English 13-year-olds, but not so amongst the Swedes. Swedish Anna, however, uses a local patisserie in a similar sense.



Swedish 13-year-olds	Shared characteristics	English 13-year-olds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A written commitment to healthy eating</i> • <i>Creative function of food</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The multifunctional nature of food</i> • <i>Discretionary risk-takers</i> • <i>Girls portrayed as healthier than boys</i> • <i>Motivated by experiences</i> • <i>Connected</i> • <i>Centrality of friends</i> • <i>Personal presentation</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Brandishing the fast food habit</i> • <i>Importance of brands</i>

Table 7.13: Characteristics of typical 13-year-olds in Sweden and England.

Importantly, the English adolescents did not appear to have any issues with the fact that fast food is generally unhealthy and did not demonstrate hesitation in making visits to such restaurants part of who they are as

consumers. On the contrary, they appear to promote this fact. Further still, for some food offers an outlet for creativity, as evidenced by Anna and Sara's love of baking.

In common with the exploratory research in stage 1, this group came across as discretionary risk-takers to varying degrees for their own shopping behaviour. The English group demonstrated a more extensive appetite for brands, which is opposite to what was found in the exploratory stage. Not unexpectedly, both sets of 13-year-olds place great value upon their respective circle of friends and these friendships are supported by a constant connection via mobile and social media. Importantly, they are motivated by experiences of various levels of complexity, from a fairly modest visit to a patisserie to foreign holidays. Both males and females are concerned with personal presentation, for the boys generally expressed by hair care, branded clothing and footwear. For the girls, this aspect is recognised through a variety of body care products, cosmetics, fashion clothing and footwear.

Altogether, Maria, Philip, Anna, Erik, Sara, Elias, Molly, Ben, Holly, Jim, Sophie and Joe are far removed from the cardboard cut-outs that Hackley (2001) maintains are often used as props for the portrayal of consumers in the academic literature. They live within a complex socio-structural context (Bandura, 2004), where consumer experiences that offer immediate benefits (i.e. taste, social experiences, independence, creative expression) pose strong competition to any concern held for long-term health consequences (Pechmann *et al.*, 2003).

The next chapter is in two parts. The first part reports on the evaluations by the same participants a year later of the *Coca-Cola 'Grandpa – Living a Healthy Lifestyle'* and the *Change4Life 'Be Food Smart'* advertisements. The second part explores healthy eating advertisements designed by the participants.

Chapter 8 Adolescents' perceptions of healthy living advertisements and their own designs of healthy eating advertisements

8.1 Introduction

This chapter is in two parts. The first part addresses the second research objective – *identify and characterise the dominant discourses in relation to food advertising/healthy eating among adolescents aged 12-14 in England and Sweden*. It reports on their evaluations of the Coca-Cola 'Grandpa – Living a Healthy Lifestyle' and the Change4Life 'Be Food Smart' advertisements in the form of postings on Padlet. (The Lantmännen advertisement was not included as it is in Swedish.) The second part addresses the third research objective – *to ascertain what message formats and advertising appeals are appropriate to use in messages promoting healthy eating/foods to young adolescents; this will partly be based on creative contribution provided by the participants themselves* – by analysing advertisements designed by the research participants. The participants were aged 14.

8.2 The Swedish Padlets

The analysis of the Swedish discussion of the Coca-Cola advertisement resulted in five discourses as depicted in table 8.1.

A *discourse of healthy living* was identified, as evident in postings such as:

Participant: *"... Coca-Cola wants to show that you can lead a healthy life, but still treat yourself."*

Participant: *"... their message was that you should eat healthily just like we have done throughout the years..."*

However, such statements tended to be qualified by a recognition of Coca-Cola as an improbable source of such a message, introducing a *discourse of scepticism*:

Participant: *"They delivered the message in a different way and you didn't think that it would turn out to be an advert for Cola."*

Participant: *"Think it is bad that Coca-Cola try to sound that healthy with all their various colas. Like Coca-Cola stop, you are not healthy stop trying to trick people about it."*

Preliminary themes	Themes	Discourses
Society Life The everyday Healthy lifestyles	Portrayal of life Demonstration of healthy living	Discourse of healthy living
Time 'Now and then' Young and old Personal relationships	Difference and sameness Target segments	
Coca-Cola Unhealthy Happiness Taste Thirst Desire Dislike	Brand longevity Well-being Occasional treats	Discourse of moderation
Marketing, selling Music	Message persuasion Message acceptance	Discourse of consumer choice
Entertainment Contradiction	Message rejection	Discourse of defiance Discourse of scepticism

Table 8.1: Discourses on Swedish Padlet regarding the Coca-Cola advertisement.

The discussion recognised that a balanced diet can accommodate the occasional treat, as evident in a *discourse of moderation*:

Participant: *"I can see myself drinking Cola sometimes at weekends perhaps but the film does not make me want to drink it all the time because it is about how you should live more healthily and treat yourself to a Cola sometimes."*

Participant: *"That you can live healthily and also drink Cola because remember what we learned in food technology: Nothing is that healthy that it is the only thing that you can eat and nothing is that unhealthy that you never should [eat it]."*

Some participants simply stated that they did not enjoy Coca-Cola. For those who did, there was also evidence of a *discourse of defiance* in that some participants would drink fizzy drinks irrespective of their health credentials. Both sets of commentary also contributed to the *discourse of consumer choice*:

Participant: *"The advert does not make me feel like having Cola, it does not make me want to buy a Cola as I don't like either Cola pop or that. Water or milk is what you should drink!"*

Participant: *"The advert does not make me want to buy Cola but I do know that it is tasty so I will buy it again."*

Participant: *"Cola is always tasty and when you see the advert you get thirsty and it makes you want to buy a Cola."*

The analysis of the Swedish discussion of the Change4Life advertisement resulted in four discourses as depicted in table 8.2. Accordingly, a *discourse of well-being* emerged, which was closely related to a *discourse of change*:

Participant: *"It makes me realise how much sugar that we consume and how large the quantities are. It makes me want to be healthier. To look after my body."*

Participant: *"It is good that they are trying to get people to realise how much sugar that we drink. And when you see it in the advertisement you would much rather have less sugar in pop."*

Preliminary themes	Themes	Discourses
Sugar Sugar free Artificial sweeteners Soft drinks Taste Cola Healthy foods Healthy versus unhealthy Looking after one's body	Bad sugar "Fake sugar" Carcinogenic "Genuine pop"	Discourse of well-being
Sugar intake Soft drink consumption Gluttony Like Dislike	Awareness Alternatives Cutting back Defiance Moderation Occasional consumption	Discourse of change
Clarity Confusion Exaggeration	Education Demonstration Message persuasion	Discourse of consumer choice
Bright colours Clay characters Drawings 14-year-olds Young children	Message acceptance Message rejection Childish Target audience	Discourse of defiance

Table 8.2: Discourses on Swedish Padlet regarding the Change4Life advertisement.

It is noteworthy that the discussion for the most part concerned sugary drinks, when in fact the advertisement also dealt with healthy eating by demonstrating the fat content in pizza. The *discourse of well-being* contained scepticism regarding low-calorie soft drinks:

Participant: *"It isn't good just because it is sugar free, fake sugar is bad."*

Participant: *"Even if it is "sugar free" there is fake sugar in and that is carcinogenic."*

Further, the analysis identified a *discourse of defiance* and a *discourse of consumer choice*, again closely related. The *discourse of defiance* contained the participants' opinions on the creative strategies employed by the advertisement, which were perceived as targeting younger children:

Participant: *"It addressed younger target markets and was a little too childish according to me, the voices were hard work."*

Participant: *"I hate that it is like clay figures."*

Participant: *"I liked the actual message in the advert, but I don't like how they had done it. It had such strong colours and the voices were really hard and strong. Perhaps they should have made the advert a little softer and not used such strong colours."*

It was clear from the discussion that the participants reserved their right to make their own consumption choices:

Participant: *"I will still be drinking pop."*

Participant: *"Absolutely I think that it affects me, I hardly drink pop at all but it just makes my opinion of pop stronger, that pop isn't good for your body and that we should keep a check on what we put into our bodies."*

8.3 The English Padlets

The analysis of the English discussion of the Coca-Cola advertisement resulted in four discourses (see table 8.3). The discourses are closely linked; frequently individual statements allude to more than one discourse. A *discourse of healthy living* was identified, evident in comments such as:

Participant: *"It makes current life look really unhealthy, and like Coke is like some sort of link to happiness."*

Closely related to the *discourse of healthy living* was a *discourse of scepticism*, reflecting a failure to ascribe any health benefits to Coca-Cola:

Participant: *"I like how they made it like something to bond over and makes you realise how bad we live, but it is a bit random for an advert about some unhealthy fizzy drink."*

Participant: *"I don't buy stuff on how good/bad the advert is I just buy it because it is a good drink, and the message is about being healthy but Coke isn't."*

Participant: *"Be healthy, drink Coke, those two don't match."*

The following statements demonstrate two further discourses – a *discourse of time* and a *discourse of personal relationships*:

Participant: *"It showed how things have changed over time but Coca-Cola has stayed the same and how it brings people together."*

Participant: *"I liked the way it showed family coming together and that even though times have changed some things stay the same like family."*

Preliminary themes	Themes	Discourses
Coke Coca-Cola Happiness Unhealthy Healthy and unhealthy diets	Mismatch Lifestyle change	Discourse of healthy living
Nostalgia Time Now and then Change Sameness Difference	Brand heritage Comparison	Discourse of time
Young and old Everyone Family	Across the generations Target market Togetherness	Discourse of personal relationships
Music Story Like Dislike Confusion Irrelevance Deceit	Message of persuasion Message of acceptance Message of rejection	Discourse of scepticism

Table 8.3: Discourses on English Padlet regarding the Coca-Cola advertisement.

The English participants were more positive than the Swedes about the Change4Life advertisement. The analysis of the English discussion resulted in three discourses as depicted in table 8.4. A *discourse of well-being* was identified, as illustrated in comments below, which also evaluate the creative strategies used.

Participant: *"I like the fact that it gives you an idea about the unhealthy foods that we eat and what it can do to our bodies. I dislike the childish feel to it because I think that all people should be able to relate to the advert."*

Participant: *"I like the way it shows you real statistics of the amount of sugar and fat in our foods."*

Participant: *"A clever way to tell people to eat healthy as you learn what's in some food, it shocked me to see that how much was in some things as I think it would do to others as well."*

Preliminary themes	Themes	Discourses
Sugar Fat Healthy Unhealthy Cancer Type 2 diabetes Obesity	"Real statistics" "Nasties"	Discourse of well-being
Demonstration Informing	Health effects Educational Alternatives	Discourse of methods of change
Factual Shocking Colourful Plasticine people Animation Childish Parents with children	Eye opener Fear appeal Creative	
Change4Life Fit for life Lifestyle change Like Convincing Dislike	Behavioural change Message persuasion Message acceptance Message rejection	Discourse of change

Table 8.4: Discourses on English Padlet regarding the Change4Life advertisement.

What is more, the discussions contained a *discourse of methods of change*:

Participant: *“Eat healthy to stay healthy. It notifies the younger audience that to stay alive longer, then you need to eat healthy. It also gives healthy alternatives to eating junk food.”*

Finally, the analysis identified a *discourse of change*, exemplified by:

Participant: *“I think the message is convincing because it goes through the process of telling u and describing in a creative way what would happen if u eat and if u drink unhealthy things it convinces u to start eating healthy and thinking about your body and the possibilities it could affect.”*

8.4 Comparison of the discourses emerging

The analysis identified commonalities, but also disparities between the discourses pursued by the two nationalities. This section explores both advertisements, starting with the Coca-Cola ‘Grandpa’ advertisement.

8.4.1 Coca-Cola ‘Grandpa’

In the discussions of both nationalities a *discourse of healthy living* emerged. This was to be expected, as this formed part of the core message delivered by Coca-Cola. What is more, both groups perceived this message as biased, expressing *scepticism* about Coca-Cola’s credibility as a source of health messages. The preliminary themes emerging contained such labels as ‘irrelevance’, ‘contradiction’ and even ‘deceit’, illustrative of the participants’ reasoning skills in their position as *reflective consumers* (Roedder John, 1999). From this point onwards, the discussions diverged. The Swedes engaged in a discourse relevant to their standing as consumers. Consequently, in a *discourse of moderation* they recognised that occasional consumption of Coca-Cola would not interfere with an overall healthy lifestyle. What is more, they demonstrated *defiance* in that they expected to be able to make their own *consumer choice*. Hence, the “discretionary risk-takers” (Kline, 2011, p. 209) emerge yet again, now aged 14. Again, a parallel can be drawn to Pechmann *et al.*’s (2003) research with adolescents that demonstrated that anti-smoking advertisements emphasising long-term negative health consequences led to greater intentions to smoke among adolescents. The discussion of the English participants remained closer to the story as played out in the advertisement, with a *discourse of time* emerging and the perception of Coca-Cola as having remained the same over the years in a society that has experienced substantial change. Finally,

in the English participants' discussion there was a *discourse of personal relationships* in which family featured strongly.

The researcher's discourse analysis of the same advertisement was undertaken using a different frame; the perspective of the researcher applying a critical gaze to the advertisement. Although it may not be possible to claim that the researcher's discourse analysis provides an objective evaluation, the analysis was guided by critical open-mindedness where the researcher did not see herself as part of the audience at that point in time. The analysis was facilitated by extensive engagement with the advertisement, unlike the two viewings afforded to the participants. The discourses identified by the researcher (see table 5.1) contained a *discourse of well-being* (similar to that of *healthy living* as emerged from the participants' discussions) and in common with the English participants' evaluation it comprised a *discourse of time* and a *discourse of love and personal relationships* (the English participants' discussion contained a *discourse of personal relationships*). The participants were invited to evaluate the advertisement from their own, personal perspective, which resulted in discourses that were specific to their own standing. Hence, discourses of *scepticism* and *defiance* as well as the entitlement to *consumer choice* in a context of *moderation*, emerged. These represent important insight specific to the groups of adolescents themselves. Hence, they may possess reasonable levels of both advertising literacy and health knowledge (Bandura, 2004). However, they reserve the right to prioritise health or a taste experience, the latter delivering an immediate psychological benefit, whereas the former promises an elusive benefit available in the distant future (Hastings and Saren, 2003). What is more, the presence of a powerful brand to which they have an emotional connection may simply push scepticism and persuasion knowledge aside (Kline, 2010).

8.4.2 Change4Life 'Be Food Smart'

The analysis identified a *discourse of well-being* and a *discourse of change* emerging from the discussions of both nationalities. The English participants were overall more positive about this advertisement and appeared to be more receptive to the message. This may have followed from previous exposure to the Change4Life campaign, with familiarity making them more receptive to the communication. What is more, a *discourse of methods of change* was apparent in their discussion. Hence, these participants appreciated that the communications objective of the advertisement was that of behavioural change; the adoption of a healthier lifestyle by making dietary changes. They also recognised that the advertisement provided solutions for achieving that change, quite possibly recognising that this delivery of health

knowledge/skills assists in instilling *self-efficacy* on the part of the target audience (Bandura, 2004; 2009).

For the Swedish participants the discussion took a different turn. It would seem that the Coca-Cola advertisement served to frame their discussion about the Change4Life advertisement. Hence, a significant part of their discussion revolved around soft drinks and they did not acknowledge the demonstration about fat content in pizza. Whilst they appeared to endorse *change*, the *discourses of defiance* and *choice* from the Coca-Cola advertisement re-emerged, leading in part to message rejection. Instead, they recognised that soft drinks may be enjoyed in moderation and alternative drinks containing artificial sweeteners may even be carcinogenic.

Again, the researcher approached this advertisement with an open mind, taking the perspective of an onlooker, rather than a member of the target audience. The researcher's analysis identified the *discourse of well-being*. Further, it identified a *discourse of empowerment and responsibility*. This discourse is related to the *discourse of change* identified by both the English and Swedish participants and emerges from the advertisement fulfilling the function of an *enabler of change*, contributing towards a feeling of *efficacy* amongst target audience members that they are able to make positive changes to their diet (Bandura, 2004; 2009). The participants, however, read the advertisement in terms of what they perceived that it wanted them to do; they perceived it as an encouragement to change their lifestyles. The researcher discerned a further discourse of *relationships and human interaction*. Neither nationality registered the relationship aspects being played out by the Plasticine characters. Rather, the characters were dismissed as childish and presumably too dissimilar to humans to be used as an analogy for a human family, resulting in a failed attempt at efficacious modelling (Bandura, 2009).

8.5 Insight regarding creative approaches

The discourse analysis provided insight regarding the adolescents' perceptions of advertising appeals. Their evaluation was delivered from the perspective of *reflective consumers* (Roedder John, 1999) and they deemed Coca-Cola's advertisement to be biased with the intention to distract the audience from the fact that the product does not provide a healthy option. Hence, they identified that Coca-Cola placed an inappropriate emphasis upon health claims, a strategy used by some HFSS advertisements as identified in the literature review (e.g. Foltz *et al.*, 2006; Roberts and Pettigrew, 2007; Prell *et al.*, 2011). The use of a storytelling approach within

a split screen format was appreciated due to the engagement it created and the entertainment value it provided.

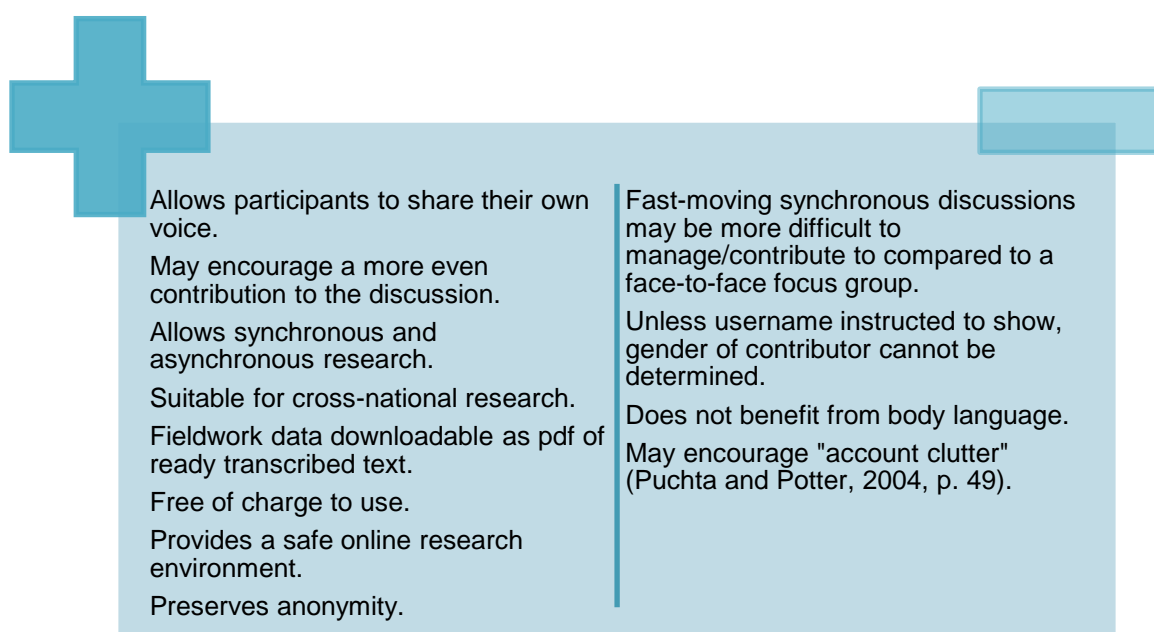
Both nationalities disliked the creative strategy used in the Change4Life advertisement. The use of animated characters and bright colours did not tend to receive approval. The approach was considered appropriate for a younger target audience, whereas for these 14-year-olds the use of peripheral cues (primary colours and animated Plasticine characters within an imaginary world) resulted in part rejection of the message. The use of photographic images of sugar cubes and fat within an animated, cartoon-like environment was referred to by some as “real statistics”. The sugar cubes and the fat represented a visualisation of the dangers within the diet and appeared to function along the lines of threat appeals. The participants’ appreciation of a fear-inducing appeal confirms findings in the literature review regarding the perceived effectiveness of such appeals for the promotion of healthy eating (Chan *et al.*, 2009a; 2009b; Chan and Tsang, 2011; Charry and Pecheux, 2011; Charry and Demoulin, 2012; Bleakley *et al.*, 2015). The discourse analysis suggests that this target audience is more likely to pay attention to health messages and so persuasion would depend upon the quality of the arguments presented (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). This finding confirms Livingstone and Helsper’s (2004) hypothesis that within the domain of food advertising, adolescents are more likely to be persuaded by the central route of the ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Consequently, it follows that as adolescents are more media literate, they may pay more attention to the informative nature of the advertisement or the value of the offering in their lives. Hence, they are more influenced by the quality of the arguments, given that they pay attention to the message and they perceive the arguments as convincing.

8.6 Evaluation of the use of Padlet as a research site

Padlet added yet further variety to the research design of the thesis and, importantly, further opportunity for the participants to share their own voice. Table 8.5 lists a number of benefits and drawbacks of Padlet as seen from the perspective of this study.

Coupled with the opportunity for the participants to have their voice heard, Padlet provides for a fairly even playing field for establishing share of voice – all participants can post without being silenced by a dominant group member, as can happen in a traditional focus group. The research was synchronous and reasonably rich data was generated. Yet the fast pace of contributions made during synchronous research makes it more difficult for the researcher to follow up statements made, or for participants to respond to

specific postings. This issue would not present itself in asynchronous (Muratore, 2008) research, where participants add their contributions over a longer time-frame. Padlet proved to be a cost- and time-efficient tool with which to conduct cross-national research. Further, the resulting pdf files contained the discussions in verbatim format, removing the inevitable researcher interpretation of what was said in audio recordings during transcription. Each entry is labelled as “anonymous” (usernames removed) in the pdf files and given that each Padlet has a long, randomised URL, provides for a safe online environment in which to conduct research with children. The researcher was unable to analyse the data in terms of potential differences between genders and naturally there was no opportunity to draw on body language. Finally, the online discussion boards did generate some “account clutter” (Puchta and Potter, 2004, p. 49), talk without direct relevance to the discussion topic, although this was no different to small talk that may result in a focus group.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows participants to share their own voice. May encourage a more even contribution to the discussion. Allows synchronous and asynchronous research. Suitable for cross-national research. Fieldwork data downloadable as pdf of ready transcribed text. Free of charge to use. Provides a safe online research environment. Preserves anonymity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast-moving synchronous discussions may be more difficult to manage/contribute to compared to a face-to-face focus group. Unless username instructed to show, gender of contributor cannot be determined. Does not benefit from body language. May encourage "account clutter" (Puchta and Potter, 2004, p. 49).
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Table 8.5: Benefits and drawbacks of using Padlet as a research site (Sherrington, 2016).

8.7 The participant-designed advertisements

From the creative contributions made by the participants, six were selected for analysis. The rationale for choice was that the advertisements should fulfil a conventional format for an advertisement. Hence, those selected had a clear message relevant to the design brief provided by the researcher.

Further, this message was delivered by a combination of advertising copy and visuals. This resulted in three poster-style advertisements and three films being selected. The poster-style advertisements are presented first, followed by the films.

8.7.1 Advertisement 1

This advertisement was designed by a group of Swedish participants. It employs the classic marketing strategy of posing a question to the target audience: *“Do you want to feel better and more confident about your body?”* The spokesperson is a cheerful cartoon-character salad wrap, making a thumbs up – an index of approval of a healthy diet (Emmison *et al.*, 2012). Images of fruit and vegetables are symmetrically presented around a centrally-placed heart composed of fruit and vegetables. An index for heart-health (Emmison *et al.*, 2012), its central position presents it as the nucleus of the message, with the images around it – the margins – subservient to the centre. This spatial configuration of the visual elements combine into a visual statement communicating the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006).

The copy then asks another question:

“Are you not going to try it too?” [The provision of encouragement to eat healthily.]

“Eating more fruit and vegetables...” [Clarifying the question just asked.]

“You are guaranteed to enjoy the results.” [The provision of a guarantee.]

The advertisement makes assumptions by its initial question, namely that the target audience is likely to have some issues with their body confidence. The advertisement then proceeds to deliver a one-sided argument. Accordingly, the advertising copy and the images combine into a somewhat paternalistic message in that it presents only one, “preferred”, solution. The guarantee – a promise of enjoyment of subsequent results – establishes positive outcome expectations (Maibach and Cotton, 1995). Their nature is not specified, although the tone of the advertisement implies that they are of the physical and self-evaluative kind, providing a form of incentive appeal (Donovan and Henley, 2010). There may be an underlying message that not choosing the preferred route leads to low body confidence – a negative outcome expectation associated with self-disapproval (Bandura, 2004) – introducing a mild *threat appeal* (Donovan and Henley, 2010). As such, the advertisement encourages a cognitive approach, but leaves little room for manoeuvre for the audience other than to try to adopt a healthy diet. An explicit conclusion is drawn for an unmotivated audience (Donovan and Henley, 2010).

Vill du må bättre och känna dig mer säker i din kropp?



Ska inte du prova också?
Att äta mer grönsaker och frukt...
Du kommer garanterat att gilla resultaten!

Image 8.1: Advertisement 1.

8.7.2 Advertisement 2

This advertisement was designed by a group of Swedish participants. The target audience is presented with two separate lifestyles, modelled vicariously (Bandura, 2009) and delivered as a binary opposition (Emmison *et al.*, 2012) with a demarcation line in-between. The lifestyle on the left is the “approved” lifestyle, indicated with the sign of a green tick. This is the lifestyle of the athletic woman running up a hill. The image with its cloudless sky functions as an index (Emmison *et al.*, 2012) that ‘the sky is the limit’ for a person adopting the lifestyle depicted, with the aim of building self-efficacy on the part of the target audience (Maibach and Cotton, 1995). A similar message is communicated by the indication that the woman is aiming for the top of the hill [the summit]; the ultimate peak of fitness. The images of food depict a number of healthy choices necessary in order to fuel the woman’s top-level achievement. Hence, the advertisement uses an *achievement appeal*. The images of a healthy diet combine with the woman runner, who appears to be effortlessly aiming for the top of the hill, into a *message of attainment*. The overall creative concept delivers an incentive appeal (Donovan and Henley, 2010), whereby in addition to cultivating new competencies the modelling has motivational effects (Bandura, 2009). However, an image of chocolate communicates that there is room for treats within a balanced diet – allowing for a *mutually beneficial exchange* by introducing a degree of *compromise* (Hastings and Domegan, 2014). Bottles of Vitamin Well¹⁷ are presented as alternatives to sugared sodas and juices. Consequently, the advertisement transfers skill-building messages through demonstration (Maibach and Cotton, 1995).

The lifestyle on the right is the “disapproved” lifestyle, communicated with the sign of a red cross. This is the lifestyle of the couch potato; the overweight man lying asleep on the sofa in front of the television. His food and drinks choices are classed as HFSS.

The message is predominantly visual. The images combine with the slogan “Go for green, because it is a hit to be fit” into an overall *message of health encouragement* (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). The target audience is presented with a choice between two lifestyles, with the intention to pre-empt counter-arguments and enhance source credibility (Donovan and Henley, 2010). However, a strong nudge (Thaler and Sunstein, 2008) is delivered for the audience to opt for the lifestyle on the left, which has already received the green tick. Having contrasted the two lifestyles, the advertisement has also made the decision for the audience.

¹⁷ A Swedish brand of vitamin water that contains no/low sugar (<http://www.vitaminwell.com>).

Go for Green

"Because it's a hit to be fit"



Image 8.2: Advertisement 2.

8.7.3 Advertisement 3

This advertisement was designed by a group of Swedish participants. It invites the target audience to consider the question of: “*Which side would you rather be on?*” The two sides are portrayed as a binary opposition (Emmison *et al.*, 2012) either side of a dividing line. Similarly to advertisement 2, this advertisement provides a two-sided message (Donovan and Henley, 2010). The left side displays an unhealthy lifestyle characterised by HFSS foods and drinks. The visuals portray undesirable aspects of such a diet. The unpresentable burger referred to in the exploratory focus groups in stage 1 of the study features, complete with an award rosette of “worst ever”. A supersize person is enjoying a supersize meal containing artificial ingredients (e.g. aspartame, also referred to in the early focus groups). The images weld together into an overall statement of excess (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006), providing negative outcome expectations that function as disincentives to an unhealthy lifestyle (Bandura, 2004; 2009) with the purpose of encouraging behaviour change. This is supported by a fact box outlining the dietary effects of such a diet: overweight and reduced energy. The box is red with a connotation to ‘red light’ associated with ‘danger’, ‘beware’ or ‘stop’ (Emmison *et al.*, 2012).

The right side is the preferable side with visuals portraying a healthy lifestyle associated with exercise and fresh food. A heart made up of fruit and vegetables provides a connotation to healthy living, heart-health, showing one’s body love and respect. A green fact box provides arguments in favour of a healthy lifestyle, including the chance of a longer life and reduced risk of heart disease. The green of the box provides a connotation to ‘green light’ associated with ‘permitted’, ‘safe’ and ‘healthy’ (Emmison *et al.*, 2012). This side accounts for the positive outcome expectations, mainly of the physical and self-evaluative sort (Bandura, 2004), which can be realised by virtue of a healthy diet. In this sense, similarly to advertisements 1 and 2, this advertisement provides an incentive appeal (Donovan and Henley, 2010).

The verbal and visual elements combine into an advertising message empowering the audience (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006), boosting their self-efficacy (Bandura, 2004; 2009). The advertisement does not make a decision for the audience; it simply presents the characteristics of an unhealthy and a healthy diet. In the spirit of social marketing, the ultimate choice is for the target audience to make (Hastings and Domegan, 2014). It assumes the target audience to be motivated and its delivery of a “cool” (i.e. balanced, factual) message may be more persuasive (Donovan and Henley, 2010).

Vilken sida vill du helst vara på?



Image 8.3: Advertisement 3.

8.7.4 Advertisement 4

Advertisement 4 was produced by a team of English participants. Two feature in the film and the third did the filming. Their faces have been obscured in order to safeguard their anonymity. The filming took place in a corridor of the school where the fieldwork was carried out. Hence, the high-school environment is the frame within which the advertisement is presented to the viewer (Emmison *et al.*, 2012). In the spirit of social semiotics, which attempts to understand how people produce meaning in specific social settings (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006), the scene is played out in the immediate school environment with the potential presence of peer pressure, as well as in the wider context of the obesity debate.



Frame 1.

In the first scene an adolescent boy is seen enjoying an unhealthy snack, whilst making appreciative noises.



Frame 2.

Another individual arrives, pushes the snacking adolescent and provides a telling off: *“You kid. Stop eating that rubbish! You need to be healthy. To drink generic sports drink.”*



Frame 3.

The powerful individual throws a bottle to the adolescent, who still has not spoken. The bottle represents the provision of a healthier alternative.



Frame 4.

The powerful individual then turns to the camera, points his finger at the audience and announces: *“And remember kids. Always stay healthy, because if you’re fat you’ve 100% chance of being bullied.”* This statement refers not to the *health risk* associated with being overweight, but the *social risk* involved (Schoenbachler and Whittler, 1996; Dickinson and Holmes, 2008; Chan and Tsang, 2011; Charry *et al.*, 2014). The spokesperson continues: *“And if you’re not, I will look for you. I will find you and I will kill you.”* In this scene, the focus shifts from the adolescent boy (who can be seen running off in the background) – to the viewers of the advertisement. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) maintain that even if it is only on an imaginary level, contact is established between the character and the viewer. This is a visual form of direct address and is created where the viewer is acknowledged explicitly. In this “image act” (p. 117), the producer uses the image to do something to the viewer; here a firm call to action to stay healthy is provided.

The dramatic advertising discourse uses a significantly strong threat appeal. In common with the Change4Life ‘Be Food Smart’ advertisement, the advertisement has a Foucaultian note. The snacking adolescent has been spotted by the Panopticon and needs to be disciplined (Clarke, 2006). An alternative reading is that the threatening statements represent the voice of Obesity, highlighting the dangers of eating unhealthily. The advertising discourse may also be an expression of how adolescents perceive that they are being targeted by health messages and feel that they are under pressure to be brought into line, with the advertisement providing a dramatisation of

this. This type of perception emerged during the initial focus groups, where the participants defended their right to go to McDonald's.

8.7.5 Advertisement 5

Advertisement 5 was produced by a group of English participants, who chose the genre of animation (Emmison *et al.*, 2012). The narrative is for the most part light-hearted, but does contain some dramatic content. By scanning the QR code below, the reader can view the advertisement in full.



Frame 1.

In this scene, the first character introduces herself: “*Hi, I’m Margaret.*” Neutral piano music is playing in the background. In the overall grammar of the advertisement, the music fulfils a support function (Scott, 1990) in adding another nuance to an advertising message that at this stage would be

perceived as overly bare without a music appeal. What is more, it may also elicit more of an emotional response in the audience (Oakes, 2007).



Frame 2.

In the second scene, the second character arrives: *"Hi, I'm Mike."*



Frame 3.

In the third scene, a conversation ensues:

Margaret: *"So where are you going?"*

Mike: *"Well, Margaret. I'm off to the juice bar. What about you?"*

Margaret: *"I'm off to McDonald's."*

Mike: *"What?!" McDonald's?!"*

At this point, dramatic-sounding music starts to play. Here, the drama of the music takes on the rhetorical task of supporting the claim that fast food may pose a threat to your health (Scott, 1990):

Margaret: *"Yes, what's wrong with McDonald's?"*

Mike: *"In just one cheese burger there's 310 calories. That can cause you severe heart problems and diabetes."*

Margaret: *"Oh no, what can I do?!"*

Mike: *"You can come with me to the juice bar."*



Frame 4.

Margaret states: *"Now, where's my horse."* The horse arrives accompanied by saloon music as used in westerns (cowboy films). The genre congruity (Oakes, 2007) between the musical genre (saloon music) and the horse (a conventional mode of transportation in westerns) does not contribute to a substantive argument in favour of healthy eating, although it may allude to the importance of exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. Rather, this delivery of what may be perceived as a *humour appeal* contributes to the light-

hearted tone of the advertisement and may be regarded as a peripheral cue (rather than delivering a substantive health-centred argument). The use of a humorous context may increase liking for the source of the message and instigate a positive mood, which may increase the persuasive effect of the advertisement (Sternthal and Craig, 1973; Weinberger and Gulas, 1992).



Frame 5.



Frame 6.

In frames 5 and 6, the characters mount their horses and ride off to the juice bar. The story has a happy ending with a visit to the juice bar replacing a visit to McDonald's.

8.7.6 Advertisement 6

This advertisement was created by a group of Swedish participants. At 33 seconds long, it is of typical television advertisement length. It is set to neutral background music of a fast tempo. The music remains the same throughout the advertisement and is intended to be congruous with the advertising message with the purpose of delivering a seamless (less distracting) fusion of words and music (Oakes, 2007), thus facilitating the persuasive delivery of the overall message. By scanning the QR code below, the reader can view the advertisement in full.



Frame 1.

The first frame sets the scene for the advertisement. It depicts two young, obese boys having a meal at McDonald's.



Frame 2.

In the second frame, it becomes apparent that the intended target audience is that of parents. The literature review identified studies proposing that the promotion of healthy eating to adolescents would benefit from targeting not only adolescents themselves, but also their parents (Highby and Mascarenhas, 1993; Chan *et al.*, 2009a; 2011a). This frame starts off by asking questions: “*Do you want your kids to be like this?*” “*Do you not want to make sure that you eat good food?*” The questions encourage cognitive engagement and appeal on an emotional level; many parents will find the sight of the two young boys and their excessive weight upsetting and so frame 1 delivers a *threat appeal* with the intention to shock. Here, the appeal may deliver a psychological threat, evoking a response associated with concern or guilt on the part of parents (Donovan and Henley, 2010). The visuals allude to the social aspects of the message (Emmison *et al.*, 2012); it is the responsibility of parents to look after the health of their children. Hence, the message draws upon the types of social emotions associated with care and dependence, which Puggelli and Bertolotti (2014) found to be used by television advertisements for healthy foods in Italy. Pedersen *et al.* (2005) refer to the importance of the family context in healthy eating interventions targeting adolescents, with parents made cognisant of their influence as role models.



Frame 3.

This is the science bit delivered as a binary opposition (Emmison *et al.*, 2012). The stomach inside the toned body on the left reveals a well-oiled, well-functioning system, by virtue of a healthy diet and exercise. The stomach inside the overweight body on the right displays what looks like a chaotic situation; the result of a diet characterised by junk food.



Frame 4.

This frame delivers yet another binary opposition (Emmison *et al.*, 2012); junk food versus healthy food. Love of the former comes with a price in the form of decreased life expectancy (use of a *threat appeal*). Yet again, we see the fruit and vegetable heart symbolising a healthy heart and the benefits emanating from a healthy diet and caring for your body (use of a *benefit appeal*). Both frames 3 and 4 use an even-handed approach to enhance source credibility, in order to pre-empt counter-arguments (Donovan and Henley, 2010).



Frame 5.

This frame invites the reader to reflect upon the overall advertising message: “So what have we learned?” The advertisement provides the answer and delivers health advice in the process: “Stay away from junk food!” The image shows an efficacious (Bandura, 2004; 2009) woman in fitness clothing rejecting pizza, Coca-Cola and chocolate. Body language in terms of the woman pulling a face and holding both hands up as a barrier against the unhealthy items signifies her rejection of the junk food (Emmison *et al.*, 2012).



Frame 6.

A voice-over in the form of a chorus delivers a call to action: “Be smart and stay healthy!”. The visual and verbal elements support each other in

delivering an educational message in terms of the desirability of eating healthily (Bandura, 2004; Kress and Leeuwen, 2006). It also alludes to the responsibility of parents to ensure the integrity of what their children eat. Here the advertisement does make the decision for the audience. Encouragement of message adoption is delivered with a degree of flattery; eating healthily is the choice of smart people.

8.8 Discussion

The following sections assess the advertisements in terms of the *message format* and *advertising appeals* used as well as *gender portrayal* and use of *peripheral cues*.

8.8.1 Message format

The poster-style advertisements demonstrate different approaches to the provision of choice. Consequently, advertisement 1 is prescriptive in that it offers only one, preferred alternative. Advertisement 2 contrasts two lifestyle options, with a strong nudge (Thaler and Sunstein, 2008) towards selecting the healthier one. Advertisement 3 provides a balanced presentation of a healthy and an unhealthy lifestyle, but leaves it to the audience to make a decision regarding what route to take. Hence out of the three, it is only advertisement 3 that fully embraces the voluntary aspect of social marketing (Andreasen, 1994; Hastings and Domegan, 2014). This advertisement assumes a higher level of involvement on the part of the audience, a situation in which message acceptance is contingent upon even-handed arguments and scope for independent decision-making (Donovan and Henley, 2010).

When it comes to the films, advertisement 4 provides little in the form of choice. The use of a strong *threat appeal* of a physical nature (Schoenbachler and Whittler, 1996; Dickinson and Holmes, 2008; Charry *et al.*, 2014) assumes compliance on the part of the target audience. Advertisement 5 does not present a choice; it delivers a simple storyline where Margaret is dissuaded from going to McDonald's. Advertisement 6 contrasts a healthy and unhealthy diet, but is strongly prescriptive in delivering a message in support of the former, appealing directly to parents to shoulder their responsibility as role models for healthy eating within the family context (Pedersen *et al.*, 2005).

8.8.2 Advertising appeals

The advertisements may be placed on a continuum running from the use of *rational/informational appeals* at one end through to *emotional* at the other. They all make use of both informational and emotional appeals to varying degrees.

The poster-style advertisements tend towards the informational end of the continuum. Their combination of copy and visuals encourages cognitive involvement to varying degrees. Advertisements 1 and 3 do this by asking the target audience to consider lifestyle-relevant questions. Advertisement 2 relies mainly on a visually delivered binary opposition, supported by a slogan that promotes healthy living. This advertisement also delivers an *achievement appeal*, modelling positive outcomes through efficacious behaviour (Bandura, 2004). As such, it works as an incentive appeal; by adopting the behaviour of the model, substantial benefits of the physical and self-evaluative kind are likely to follow (Bandura, 2004; 2009; Donovan and Henley, 2010). Achievement appeals have previously been rated positively by Hong Kong adolescents for use in advertising discouraging consumption of soft drinks (Chan *et al.*, 2009a) and by Hong Kong and Danish adolescents in advertisements for healthy eating (Chan and Tsang, 2011). All three advertisements employ *health appeals* and the content of each of the advertisements encourages the making of an informed decision. Accordingly, as they rely on a substantive message they pursue the central route to persuasion, a route that has been found to deliver longer-lasting persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). This would appear to be an appropriate strategy given that the communications objective is behavioural change in terms of the adoption of a healthier lifestyle, associated with relational thinking and long-term social change (Hastings and Saren, 2003). Dooley *et al.* (2010) found public service announcements delivering a *health benefit* claim accompanied by a strong, simple visual to be more effective than either *body image* or *positive experience* claims at encouraging healthy eating plans among adolescents aged 14-17. This demonstrates the power of physical outcome expectations, provided that adolescents possess the perceived efficacy to comply with the message (Bandura, 2004).

The three films adopt different emphasis in terms of information and emotion. Advertisement 4 uses a predominantly emotional advertising appeal in the form of a dramatic *threat appeal*, which combines with a subordinate *health appeal*. This is in the form of a strong statement discrediting what is perceived to be an unhealthy snack. A replacement is offered in the form of “generic sports drink”. This is a rather weak health appeal, given that sports drinks tend to have high sugar content. Advertisement 5 uses a different genre; a simple animation employing a *humour appeal* in combination with a mild *threat appeal*. There is also a weak *health appeal* in the form of a visit to

a juice bar in preference to McDonald's, having declared the calorie content of a burger and the possible health consequences of a fast food diet and so, instilling change in response to perceived negative outcome expectations (Bandura, 2004). Advertisement 6 uses a logical structure, combining emotion and information. Directed at parents, the first frame delivers a *shock-inducing threat appeal* with a view to engaging parents at an emotional level. The second frame encourages cognitive involvement. The following two frames present the arguments in favour of eating healthily in the form of *benefit appeals*, essentially stressing positive outcome expectations (Bandura, 2004). Frame 5 identifies the lesson learned from the advertisement. Frame 6 provides a call to be healthy, indicating this to be the smart choice of empowered individuals. Accordingly, advertisement 6 employs a clear *health appeal*, but uses a shock-inducing *threat appeal* in its first scene in order to capture the attention of its audience.

8.8.3 Gender portrayal

Out of the six advertisements, it is only one – advertisement 1 – that does not contain gender connotation. Out of the five that do, it is only in advertisement 5 where a female character is depicted as unhealthy; Margaret is on her way to McDonald's, but is persuaded by Mike to go to the juice bar with him. Here, it is the male character, who is the health promoter. In advertisement 2, the athletic woman sprints up the hill and the male couch potato is asleep on the sofa. Advertisement 3 depicts a supersize man consuming fast food and a woman out running. The unhealthy snacker in advertisement 4 is male, whereas in advertisement 6 the only overweight person, in addition to the two obese boys, is a man (although there is also a fit-looking male person opposite). A woman in gym-attire is seen rejecting junk food with a strong look of disapproval on her face. These findings echo the consumer collages in stage 2 of the research, where food did not tend to be salient for the male consumers and where it did feature, it was for the most part of the "treat" or convenience kind. Puggelli and Bertolotti's (2014) study of Italian television advertisements found that characters in television advertisements for unhealthy foods tend to be school-age children and male.

8.8.4 The use of peripheral cues

Out of the six advertisements, advertisements 4 and 5 contain the least substantive advertising messages. The message delivered by advertisement 4 is stark and simple – adopt a healthy lifestyle or face the consequences. The message delivered by advertisement 5 is simpler still. This advertisement highlights that eating at McDonald's may lead to heart disease

and diabetes and promotes a visit to a juice bar as a preferable alternative. This advertisement relies on peripheral cues (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) in order to persuade its audience. Consequently, it uses a *humour appeal* within the genre of an animation. It also employs a *music appeal*. As explained above, the early scenes are accompanied by neutral piano music. This is replaced by dramatic-sounding music at the mention of McDonald's. Once Margaret has decided against her planned visit to McDonald's, her horse arrives to the sound of saloon music. In the absence of a strong, central argument, the advertisement attempts to persuade by peripheral cues, simply alluding to the importance of healthy eating and exercise.

8.9 Conclusions

This chapter has reported the findings from the third and final stage of this longitudinal study. Aged 14, the participants demonstrated characteristics commensurate with the reflective stage of Roedder John's (1999) consumer socialisation stages. Accordingly, both the English and the Swedish participants detected what they perceived to be bias and even deception in the Coca-Cola advertisement. As a producer of sugared soft drinks, the participants did not perceive Coca-Cola to be a credible source of an advertisement promoting a healthy lifestyle. Hence, a *discourse of scepticism* regarding the Coca-Cola advertisement emerged for both nationalities. Commensurate with their enhanced processing capacity, motivation and knowledge (Moore and Lutz, 2000), the participants were in a position to integrate their product experiences and their general knowledge of Coca-Cola with the advertisement in providing their evaluations. Participants of both nationalities stressed that they would not let themselves be persuaded to purchase Coca-Cola from being exposed to the advertisement. They were careful to point out their right to choose. What is more, their knowledge regarding the unhealthy properties of Coca-Cola notwithstanding, some participants yet again declared their discretionary risk-taking behaviour (Kline, 2011) for individual consumption – they enjoy Coca-Cola and will buy it. Among the Swedes in particular, there was a *discourse of defiance* and a *discourse of consumer choice*. Importantly, there was also a concurrent *discourse of moderation*; soft drinks may be consumed occasionally. This insight coincides with Pechmann *et al.*'s (2003) finding that advertisements emphasising negative health-consequences of smoking may in fact increase adolescents' intention to smoke.

In terms of advertising appeals, both nationalities did enjoy the storytelling approach of the Coca-Cola advertisement and as such, the advertisement provided entertainment value. Young consumers' appreciation of the

entertainment provided by advertisements has previously been documented in the literature (Ritson and Elliott, 1995; 1999; Anderson *et al.*, 2008).

The Change4Life advertisement appeared to lead to message rejection for the most part for the Swedish participants. Discourses of *well-being* and *change* emerged from their discussions, but the discourses of *defiance* and *consumer choice* evident in their discussion of the Coca-Cola advertisement re-emerged. In fact, the emphasis within the discussion upon soft drinks suggested that the Coca-Cola advertisement served to frame the Swedes' discussion of the Change4Life advertisement. What is more, they had an issue with the creative approach of the Change4Life advertisement, which with its Plasticine figures was deemed to be for younger children and so failed in its attempt to model efficacious health behaviour (Bandura, 2004) due to a lack of similarity to the audience. The English participants were likely to have had prior experience of the Change4Life campaign and overall provided the advertisement with a more positive rating, although they also expressed reservations regarding the creative strategy, which was considered "too young". A discourse of *strategies of change* emerged from their discussion, indicative of a perceived sense of positive purpose with the advertisement in its delivery of the knowledge and skills (Maibach and Cotton, 1995; Bandura, 2004) necessary for adopting a healthy diet. These participants praised the creative strategy of using what they termed "real statistics"; this referred to the use of sugar cubes to visualise sugar content of soft drinks and wine-glass measures of fat to show the amount of fat in pizza – essentially "visual statistics". Accordingly, these participants appreciate simple and clear information regarding ingredients.

The advertising appeals used in the participant-designed advertisements are depicted in figure 8.1. The advertisements all used *health appeals* of varying strength. This is in line with Pugelli and Bertolotti's (2014) evaluation of Italian television advertisements, which found that advertisements for healthy foods tend to use health appeals. The participant-designed advertisements contain a range of appeals, some of them related and some of them variations on the same appeal theme. Hence, in addition to *health*, there is an *achievement appeal* that alludes to what can be achieved virtue of a healthy diet. Further, there is a *benefit appeal*, referring to the list of positive outcomes from a healthy lifestyle. Both the *achievement* and *benefit appeals* model positive outcome expectations, mostly social and self-evaluative, resulting from a healthy diet and may be described as forms of *incentive appeals* (Donovan and Henley, 2010). *Threat appeals* are used in several advertisements. Advertisement 4 uses a somewhat stronger *threat appeal* and advertisement 6 uses a *threat appeal* delivering a shock effect as an attention-grabbing device, which also triggers cognitive involvement of a social kind amongst parents.

There are some references in the literature to threat appeals being well received in health-promoting advertisements targeting adolescents (Chan *et al.*, 2009a; 2009b; Chan and Tsang, 2011; Charry and Pecheux, 2011; Bleakley *et al.*, 2015) and the Change4Life ‘Be Food Smart’ advertisement also uses a threat appeal in displaying sugar and fat content in food and drink, whilst pointing out potential health consequences. Advertisement 5 uses the appeals of *animation* and simple-style *storytelling*, supported by a simple *humour appeal*. Advertisements 5 and 6 both make use of a *music appeal*.

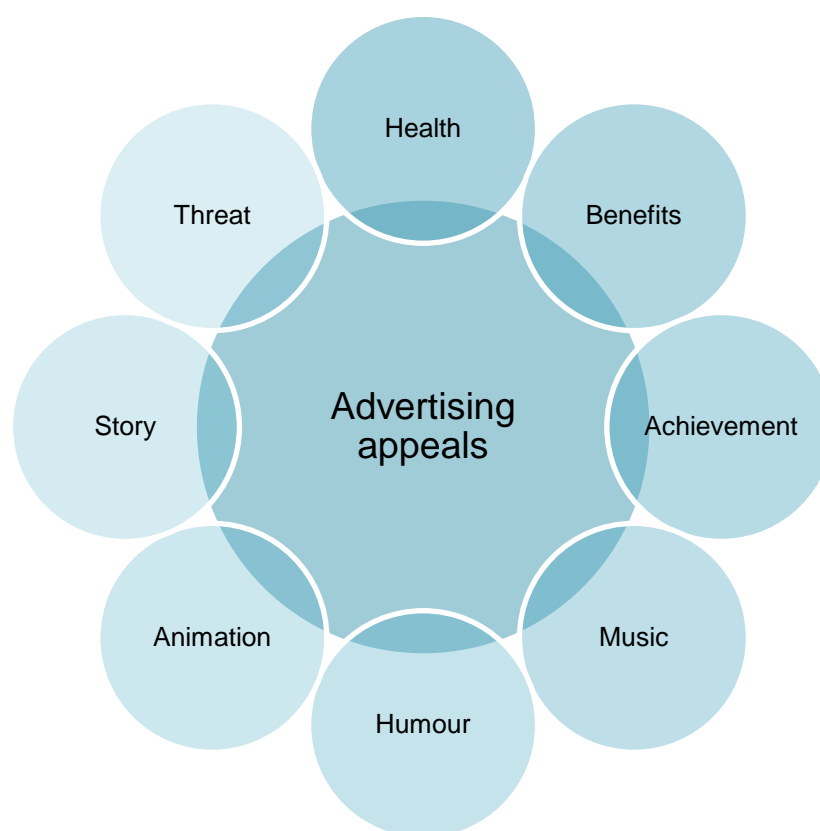


Figure 8.1: Advertising appeals in the participant-designed advertisements (Sherrington, 2016).

Advertisements 4 and 5 are different from the other advertisements. The main advertising appeal used in advertisement 4 is that of a *threat appeal*. Its threatening approach may well risk the audience rejecting the message. There may in fact be an undercurrent in this advertisement, communicating that the age group feels picked upon and ordered to adopt a healthy lifestyle, which may in fact lead to continuance of unhealthy habits (Pechmann *et al.*, 2003). Despite its apparent simplicity, advertisement 5 delivers an

information-based argument by providing the calorie-count of a McDonald's cheese-burger and highlighting the risk of developing heart-disease and diabetes, as a result of a fast food diet – delivery of a negative outcome expectation of the physical kind (Bandura, 2004). This message is cleverly delivered within the genre of a light-hearted animation, supported by both *humour* and *music appeals*. The approach taken may well reflect earlier comments in the focus groups in stage 1, namely that advertisements need to be “fun” in order to successfully speak to young adolescents.

The critical approach adopted by the participants in evaluating the Coca-Cola and the Change4Life advertisements as well as the creative strategies used in designing their own advertisements, suggest that advertisements promoting healthy eating to the age group should contain a strong argument that encourages persuasion to take place along the central route of the ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). In the absence of research evidence, proposals have been made in the literature that on the basis that advertising strategies for unhealthy foods appear to work, the same strategies may be adopted for advertising for healthy foods (e.g. Foltz *et al.*, 2006; Kelly *et al.*, 2006; Dias and Agante, 2011; Puggelli and Bertolotti, 2014). The findings presented in this chapter suggest that such an approach would be inappropriate. HFSS foods tend to make use of peripheral cues, diverting attention away from the fact that the foods are unhealthy. The research presented here indicates that the target audience of 12-14-year-olds require a substantive argument, identifying the importance and clarifying the benefits of a healthy diet for them. This appears to support McAlister and Bargh's (2016) study into the utility of the ELM with children, which found weak arguments and weak peripheral cues to dissuade children from thinking positively about a breakfast cereal in a high-involvement condition. It is through clear, convincing arguments that the age group may be persuaded, making the central route preferable.

Finally, the findings reported here, as well as some of the collages in chapter 9, suggest the presence of gender stereotyping with male consumers being portrayed as more unhealthy in advertising, whereas female consumers tend to be depicted as healthy. Looking at the weight statistics presented in section 2.7.1, the prevalence of overweight is slightly higher among English 11-15-year-old girls compared to boys. In the absence of comparable Swedish statistics, statistics for Swedish children aged 9-11.5 show a very similar situation for both genders. What is more, the *National Diet and Nutrition Survey* (Public Health England, 2014a) found boys' mean consumption of fruit and vegetables to be higher than that of girls (see 2.7.3). Hence, the portrayal of boys as unhealthy in advertising seems unfair on the basis of weight statistics as well as fruit/vegetable consumption and can be claimed discriminatory and unhelpful.

Chapter 9 Overall findings: Advertising of healthy eating guided by social cognitive theory and social marketing

9.1 Introduction

This thesis has approached food advertising from the perspective of adolescents, with the purpose of understanding how to advertise healthy eating to them. This chapter synthesises the findings from the three fieldwork stages within the framework of Hastings and Domegan's (2014) four dimensions to a social marketing orientation (see figure 9.1). The analysis accompanying each dimension addresses aspects of relevance to advertising of healthy eating, providing recommendations for advertising practice and communications policy. The insight gained is used to illuminate and extend Bandura's (2004) model of social cognitive theory (SCT) (see figure 9.6), making it appropriate as a model to guide advertising of healthy eating to an adolescent target audience. The extended model is accompanied by a set of strategic and tactical communications and persuasion strategies introduced throughout the chapter and summarised in table 9.1.

It is appropriate to start by briefly recapping the communications challenge facing the social marketer in promoting healthful eating to adolescents. The socio-structural context has been described as an obesogenic environment, where easy access to energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods accompanied by a sedentary lifestyle (WHO, 2016) present impediments to a healthy lifestyle. Some impediments exist on a personal level. Accordingly, young adolescents have been found to exhibit a lack of involvement with dietary behaviour (Martens *et al.*, 2005) and tend not to treat diet-related personal health with urgency (Evans *et al.*, 1995; Neumark-Sztainer *et al.*, 1999; Croll *et al.*, 2001; Power *et al.*, 2010). Although they perceive it as beneficial and desirable, adolescents have been found to regard healthy eating as boring and unenjoyable (Chang and Tsang, 2011). Much of the blame for the obesity epidemic has been apportioned to food advertising (Harker *et al.*, 2007). Environmental and personal factors jointly lead to a lack in collective efficacy (Bandura, 2004; 2009) to embrace healthy eating.

Young adolescents find themselves at a stage in-between younger children and adults; although still dependent upon their parents, this life-stage comes with increasing independence. With their own spending power, they make discretionary purchases for food for their own consumption. This consumption often takes place away from home. They also influence family spending for food products and represent a future market; some of the food habits that they carry with them into adulthood are formed during

adolescence. It is in this vein of adolescents making up three markets – *current*, *influence* and *future* (McNeal, 1992) – that the extensions to Bandura’s model are proposed.

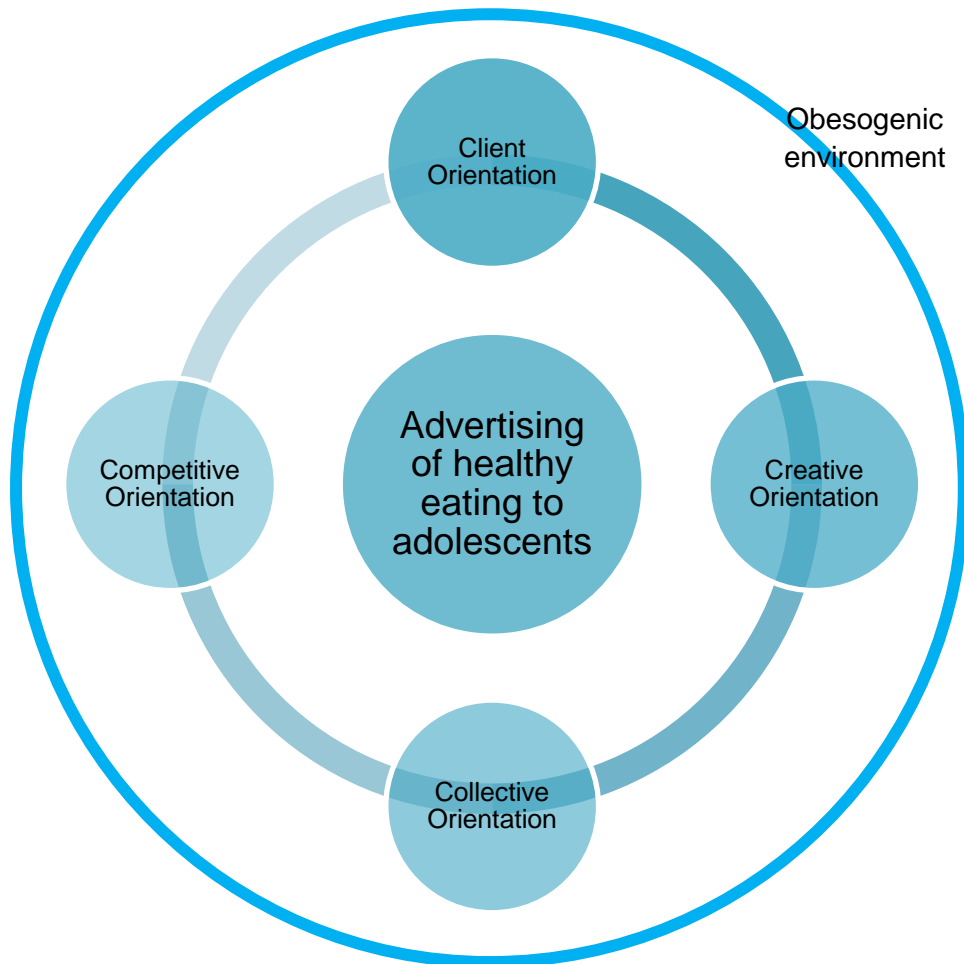


Figure 9.1: Social marketing framework for synthesising the main findings (adapted from Hastings and Domegan, 2014).

9.2 Client orientation – the adolescent food consumer

Successful advertising of healthy eating to adolescents is contingent upon appreciation of their key consumer characteristics (Hastings and Haywood, 1993; Chan *et al.*, 2009a). The fieldwork was longitudinal with the participants aged 12 at the first research event and 14 at the final event, which positions them in the *reflective stage* of Roedder John’s (1999) consumer socialisation framework. The research provided insight in terms of the adolescents’ *advertising literacy*, *scepticism regarding advertising* and

health literacy. What is more, the research identified the occurrence of *social consumption of advertising*.

In terms of *advertising literacy*, both English and Swedish adolescents appreciate the *selling intent* of advertising at the age of 12, whereas some are still developing their understanding of *persuasive intent* (Wright *et al.*, 2005; Carter *et al.*, 2011). Consequently, they will reflect upon how they may or may not be persuaded by food advertising and their possible purchase behaviour, but their reflection does not necessarily encompass higher-order advertising literacy that would acknowledge additional advertising functions such as brand building. Young English and Swedish adolescents are able to reason about advertisers' and consumers' (including different target groups) different perspectives, although their appreciation of bias and deception is likely to vary. Consequently, McDonald's advertisements featuring perfect-looking burgers may be seen by some as being in order, as they recognise the role of such advertising to be to inform the market about what is available for purchase with the purpose of enticing customers to the restaurant. It follows that some 12-year-olds simply recognise the *selling intent*, when some of their friends display more advanced understanding of the *persuasive intent*, questioning the appropriateness (fairness; Wright *et al.*, 2005) of such advertising. Carter *et al.* (2011) have previously argued that it may take children well into their teenage years to develop their understanding of the persuasive intent of advertising. Ward (1974) proposed that consumer socialisation is a lifelong developmental phenomenon. The Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) (Friestad and Wright, 1994; Wright *et al.*, 2005) similarly recognises how consumers' persuasion knowledge develops throughout life, with every exposure to new types of persuasion attempts.

12-year-old English and Swedish adolescents are still in the process of developing *scepticism* regarding food advertising and demonstrated behaviour commensurate with a developmental pattern for adolescents proposed by Bousch *et al.* (1994). Hence, they will frequently express sceptical views regarding fast food advertising, including the use of premiums, although their scepticism may still lack a solid foundation. Consequently, general attitudes regarding the persuasive attempts of food advertising may be picked up from influential socialisation agents, in particular parents, but young adolescents' specific knowledge required to underpin scepticism is still developing. Further, the 12-year-old Swedes demonstrated how they are capable of integrating the two separate stimuli of food advertising and product trial, where their exposure to food advertising frames their subsequent evaluation of the food upon consumption (Moore and Lutz, 2000). Importantly, at the age of 12 some of the English adolescents required nudging to think reflectively about the food and drink

advertisements presented to them, whereas the Swedes engaged in an unprompted, sceptical evaluation.

At the age of 14, when evaluating the Coca-Cola 'Grandpa' advertisement, both nationalities demonstrated spontaneous scepticism of Coca-Cola's credibility as a source of health messages. This may be a sign of their acquisition of more robust, generally applicable persuasion knowledge. However, this enhanced scepticism may follow from repeated exposure to Coca-Cola's advertising especially, including the brand's other communications activities, accompanied by consumption of the product and exposure to the current sugar debate in mass media as well as educational messages at school. Consequently, the adolescents were likely to have been in a position to be able to draw on all three sets of knowledge structures – *topic*, *persuasion* and *agent* – in the PKM (Friestad and Wright, 1994). Wright *et al.* (2005) propose that adolescents' persuasion-coping proficiency often remains highly context-bound, geared to the same forms of advertising tactics in the same media as they have encountered previously. This may well have been the case for Coca-Cola in the evaluation task. An important implication is that adolescents' persuasion knowledge may not be consistent across different product categories, brands and advertising appeals. Hence, the fact that the adolescents were critical about Coca-Cola does not automatically mean that they are able to apply the same level of persuasion knowledge to other situations that they are less familiar with.

It is of significance that the Swedish 12-year-olds demonstrated a critical approach towards television advertising within the focus group discussions. There was no indication that not having been directly targeted by Swedish television advertisements up till that point had delayed their consumer socialisation. Survey research with a nationally representative sample would be required to ascertain whether this is the general case for Swedish children. Such confirmation would provide reassurance for other countries considering a similar ban that they are unlikely to deprive children of helpful consumer socialisation benefits that may come with advertising exposure. It is important to note that the Swedes were familiar with the advertising ban and spoke about it in the stage 1 focus groups. Hence, it follows for policy-makers in other countries that such a ban should be accompanied by a disclosure to children of the reasons for the presence of such restrictions. An open, educational discussion is likely to contribute to their development of persuasion knowledge and sensitise them as to the appropriateness (Wright *et al.*, 2005) of marketing targeted to children.

In terms of *health literacy*, young English and Swedish adolescents possess a reasonable, general understanding of what constitutes healthy and unhealthy eating/foods. The depth of their understanding varied, with 14-year-old English adolescents expressing surprise at the sugar content of

sugared soft drinks in the Change4Life advertisement, whereas the 12-year-old Swedish adolescents spoke about sugar content in measures of sugar lumps in foods and drinks, a result of an information campaign run by the Swedish dental health service. The focus group discussions suggested a lack of clarity around carbohydrates, with statements by the English 12-year-olds to the effect that your body needs some sugar, a source of which may be sweets. The 5-a-day concept enjoys a high level of awareness among English 12-year-olds.

The discourse of Swedish 12-year-olds makes references to home-grown produce, the desirability of fewer food miles and the preference of organic foods, as well as the reassurance provided by organic certification. However, adolescents make a distinction between *family food* and *discretionary food consumption*, the latter of which is financed by their own spending money. Their discretionary foods represent treats and indulgence options and here both nationalities take on the role of “*discretionary risk-takers*” (Kline, 2011, p. 209). Harris *et al.* (2014) maintain that even with well-developed appreciation of the persuasive intent of advertising, adolescents are vulnerable to unhealthy foods marketing (also see Linn *et al.*, 1982). Kline (2010) maintains that it is unlikely that adolescents are able to perform complex price-benefits-risk calculations associated with exercising rational choice and that this is especially the case for products associated with long-term health risks, such as fast food. There was awareness of the presence of such risks among some of the adolescents of both nationalities, but others did not appear to perceive a sense of urgency when it comes to maintaining a healthy diet, which was also identified as a barrier to healthy eating in the literature review (Evans *et al.*, 1995; Neumark-Sztainer *et al.*, 1999; Croll *et al.*, 2001; Power *et al.*, 2010). It follows that both nationalities would benefit from advertising (as well as other forms of marketing communications) in order to assist them in developing the requisite health knowledge (Bandura, 2004) needed for a healthy diet (e.g. different types of carbohydrates, including recommended daily amounts) accompanied by a sense of urgent relevancy of healthy eating to the age group.

When it comes to their own discretionary spending, adolescents may defy concerns regarding unhealthy foods and champion their right to choose to visit fast food restaurants such as McDonald's. English 12-year-olds are especially passionate about defending these rights. This confirmed findings by Dixey *et al.* (2001) that children will not be coerced into a healthier lifestyle, despite considerable health literacy. An explanation for this mind-set may be offered by research in the context of adolescents and smoking. Pechmann *et al.* (2003) found adolescents to perceive negative health consequences to be in the distant future and so of little concern. The use of threat appeals was found to add glamour and rebellion, with associated

increases in intentions to smoke. The promise of great-tasting food at a social destination provides a value proposition that may simply mean that adolescents' health literacy is over-ruled by a situation described by Kline (2010) as one where the affection for a brand makes scepticism and persuasion knowledge less relevant. This relates to their own discretionary spending, where they take on the role of gatekeepers. With this apparent suspension of health literacy and persuasion knowledge, initiatives to reduce marketing of unhealthy foods targeting young adolescents are especially relevant, given that they are considered to be highly vulnerable to persuasive advertising for unhealthy foods (Harris *et al.*, 2014).

As emerged from the collage research, food itself may fulfil a number of functions for 13-year-old English and Swedish adolescents (see figure 9.2). Accordingly, food tends to feature less in the discourse of boys, taking on a straightforward role of *providing nutrition*. Where present, the emphasis is on discretionary options or unhealthy foods, rather than healthy eating. Healthy eating matters to 13-year-old girls and so food for them may be a *provider of personal well-being*, tied up with self-evaluative outcome expectations where self-approval is key (Bandura, 2004). Importantly, for these young adolescents food *facilitates social interaction* in that they enjoy visiting fast food restaurants together. This discretionary food consumption offers valuable *taste experiences*. Visits to fast food restaurants provide *independence from adults*, contributing to adolescents' further consumer socialisation. The *social experience*, the *taste experience* and the offer of a degree of *independence* provide an attractive 'value package' to these adolescents. Accordingly, social outcome expectations (Bandura, 2004) for some are more important than health aspects. The focus group discussions in England indicated that the peer environment may prevent healthy eating away from home. Further, some adolescents' love of baking means that for them, food offers an *outlet for creativity*.

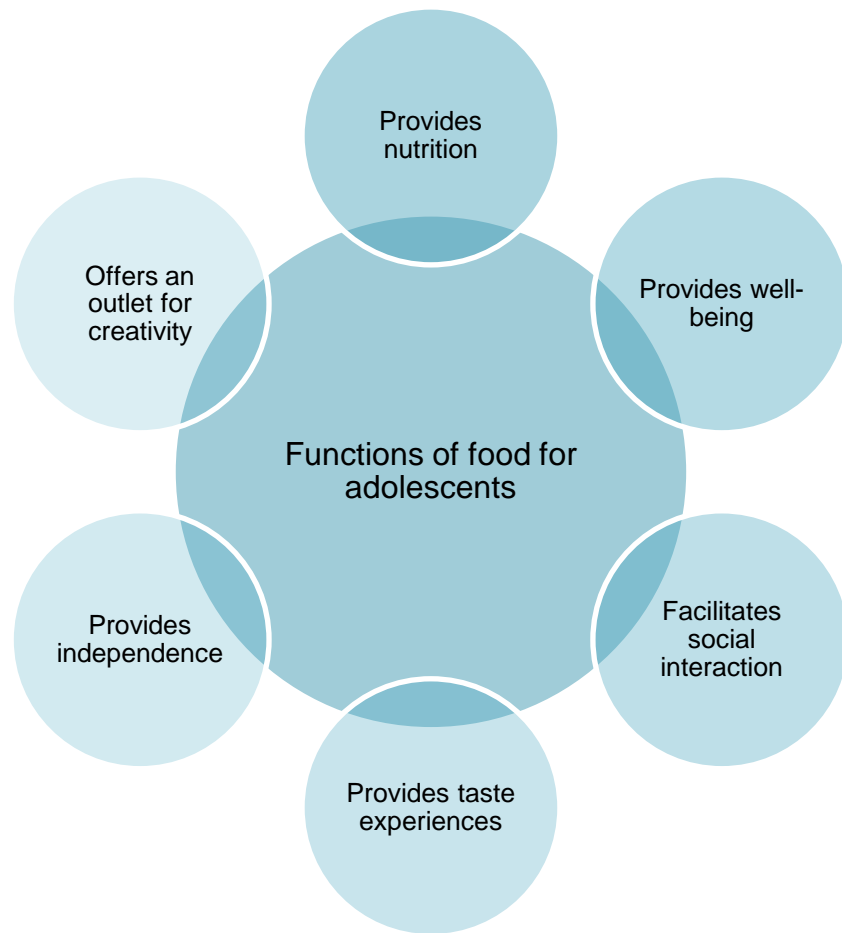


Figure 9.2: Functions of food for adolescent consumers (Sherrington, 2016).

Finally, television advertisements may provide *entertainment value* for young adolescents. This was particularly evident with the 12-year-old Swedish participants' fascination with a long-running advertising campaign for the grocery retailer ICA, delivered via a storytelling approach. The ICA campaign delivered value on a number of levels. Firstly, it delivered *entertainment value* on an individual recipient level; the recipients simply enjoyed watching the advertisements. Knowledge of the advertisement storyline and familiarity with the names of the "cast" provided *talk value/social currency* to gain access to conversations about these advertisements with the peer group, providing for *social consumption* of the advertisements (Ritson and Elliott, 1995; 1999). What is more, the Swedish adolescents found *play value* in television advertisements in that they would play the "advertising game", where the first person to correctly name the source of an advertisement would score a point.

9.3 Creative orientation

The initial focus groups identified that 12-year-old English and Swedish adolescents find general food advertising boring. The consumer profiles of the 13-year-olds as depicted in the collages and in the narrated vignettes feature male adolescents as having little interest in healthy foods, whereas female adolescents are more interested in healthy options. The consumer profiles for both genders prioritise discretionary food of the treat variety. Crucially, the focus group discussions with the 12-year-old English adolescents indicated that they feel under pressure to be healthy and that this state of affairs may even be counter-productive. Hence, the quest should be for the creation of a positive, pressure-free conversation around healthy eating. Here, the English adolescents may stand to learn from the Scandinavian “just-enough-ideal”: Johansson *et al.*’s (2009, p. 47) ethnography found Scandinavian children to perceive food along a continuum, rather than being classed as either healthy or unhealthy. The Swedes in this study used a similar discourse, recognising that foods that are considered unhealthy may be eaten in moderation. Consequently, one of the Swedish-designed advertisements promoting healthy eating contains chocolate. Steering actual advertising discourse away from the dichotomy of healthy versus unhealthy foods, may be more palatable to an adolescent English audience. This would introduce the idea of compromise (Hastings and Domegan, 2014), central to mutually beneficial exchange and with the potential to strengthen adolescents’ efficacy (Bandura, 2004; 2009) and the likelihood of subsequent behaviour change.

The advertisement evaluation task with the 14-year-old adolescents found both nationalities to express dislike of the creative approach used by the Change4Life ‘Be Food Smart’ advertisement. Their negative ratings related to the use in the advertisement of Plasticine characters, bright colours and squeaky voices. These characteristics meant that the advertisement was perceived as for younger children. The message characteristics just described are all peripheral cues in the advertisement, as they do not deliver a substantive advertising message (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Their role is to frame a central, substantive argument. Importantly, they are the constituents of a distinct brand identity, which is available for use via open source marketing and that extends well to new related contexts. The characteristics stand out in a cluttered communications environment and are likely to engage young children, who have not yet developed the knowledge-structures required in order to elaborate on a more complex health-related central argument. However, for the 14-year-olds, the characteristics were dismissed as *issue-irrelevant peripheral cues* and dislike of the source characteristics led some to dismiss the message outright (Donovan and Henley, 2010). Hence, advertising targeting 14-year-old English and Swedish

adolescents needs to use a creative approach reflective of their perceived standing as “older children”.

English and Swedish adolescents place high demands on advertising production characteristics already at the age of 12. As a target audience, they like to be entertained and hence the 14-year-olds of both nationalities appreciated the storytelling approach used in the Coca-Cola ‘Grandpa’ advertisement and the Swedish 12-year-olds were universally involved with the ICA advertisements delivering a humour-injected storyline that continuously changes across advertisements. The Coca-Cola ‘Grandpa’ advertisement delivers a *health appeal* ostensibly promoting a healthy lifestyle. Persuasion is via a set of peripheral cues (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) in the form of a storytelling approach, a slice of life appeal and background music, attempting persuasion via an approach of classical conditioning (Allen and Janiszewski, 1989). The creative approach of the advertisement was accepted by the 14-year-olds, as the peripheral cues are integrated with the overall advertising message and can be described as *issue-relevant*. Not too much encouragement is provided for the audience to elaborate upon the message, for the simple reason that put under scrutiny, Coca-Cola would not be a credible source of a health message and this was clearly articulated by the 14-year-olds from both countries.

The Change4Life ‘Be Food Smart’ advertisement does deliver a substantive health argument, inviting elaboration along the central route (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Both nationalities commented upon the visual representation of the amount of sugar in soft drinks and fat in pizza. One of the English adolescents referred to this as “real statistics” and adolescents from both countries expressed surprise at the amounts of sugar and fat involved. This signals that an overly complex substantive message may fail to resonate with a young adolescent audience. Translating grams of sugar and fat into quantities that can be discerned by the naked eye, produces a message that is more likely to be grasped by a young audience; one English adolescent referred to the impact achieved “when you see it”.

Arguments have been offered from the perspectives of consumer socialisation and consumer rights that children are entitled to information and choices in their position as consumers, with advertising having an important role to fulfil (Todd, 2010). However, in recognising children’s entitlement to choose, it is important for such advertising to enable an informed choice, as seen from the perspective of a child and their developing health literacy and persuasion knowledge. The findings regarding “real statistics” provide support for the call of the UK Health Select Committee that producers should label single-portion products containing added sugar to display sugar content in teaspoons (BBC News, 2015b). Nutrition information that is simple, understandable and accessible for children (and adults) has also been called

for by the WHO (2016). Hence, professional industry bodies such as the Advertising Association in the UK and Swedish Advertisers should consider stipulating within their codes of practice that advertisements for food and drinks containing added sugar should visually state the sugar content in a measure of teaspoons for a single serving. This would function akin to a health warning and facilitate an informed decision. Alcohol advertising in Sweden may set a precedent for its acceptability: Swedish alcohol advertising may only appear in print and online. 20% of the advertisement must be devoted to a warning message regarding health risks associated with alcohol consumption. The advertisement must simply show the product; it can neither make associations to people and lifestyles, nor encourage consumption. Alcohol advertising may not appear on television or radio (IOGT-NTO, no date).

The majority of the advertisements designed by the adolescents themselves (see section 8.7) present arguments and claims associated with health relevant to the central route of the ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Considering that the brief was to design advertisements that speak to their own age group, this confirms Livingstone and Helsper's (2004) contention that in the domain of food advertising, adolescents are more likely to be persuaded by the central route. As such, Livingstone and Helsper propose that adolescents are more likely to pay attention to the creative or informative nature of food advertisements or the value of the product in their lives, placing importance upon the quality of the advertising arguments. The stakes are high for advertisers in communicating about everyday food with 12-year-old consumers from both countries, as one Swedish female focus group participant confirmed: "*You don't tend to, like, think about food advertising.*" At the age of 12, both sets of adolescents made it clear that in creative terms, food advertisements had to "*be fun*" or they would switch off.

At the age of 14, the adolescents designed advertisements that communicate about healthy eating using a range of advertising appeals. The advertisements draw upon informational and emotional persuasion to varying degrees. Figure 9.3 categorises the advertising appeals previously identified in figure 8.1, into three categories on the basis of *information* and *emotion*:

Health, benefits and *achievement* (marked as green) are the most factual appeals and are used in order to deliver health-relevant central arguments to encourage elaboration and persuasion along the central route. Dooley *et al.* (2010) found public service advertisements (PSAs) associated with *health benefits* to deliver more effective obesity prevention social marketing messages targeting adolescents aged 14-17, than PSAs associated with either *body image* or the provision of a *positive experience*. Dooley *et al.* conclude that the adolescents' stated behaviour intention was associated

with the presentation of simple, strong visuals and health statistics relating to current (rather than long-term) health consequences.

Music, humour, animation and story (marked as orange) introduce emotional appeals with a positive note and are employed in a support-function to the substantive health messages. *Threat appeals* of varying strengths (marked as red) introduce stronger, purpose-oriented emotion, in order to create and hold attention and subsequently encourage behaviour change. In their position as advertising creatives, these adolescents have shown that an appropriate advertising approach for advertising healthy eating to their age group, is one communicating a substantive health message that encourages elaboration in order to persuade via the central route. These messages are delivered using striking visuals and sparse copy. Issue-relevant arguments are likely to be supported by peripheral cues to ensure a required level of “fun”. These peripheral cues ought to be *issue-relevant* in order to successfully encourage adolescents’ more reflective and strategic response to advertising (Roedder, 1981; Roedder John, 1999).

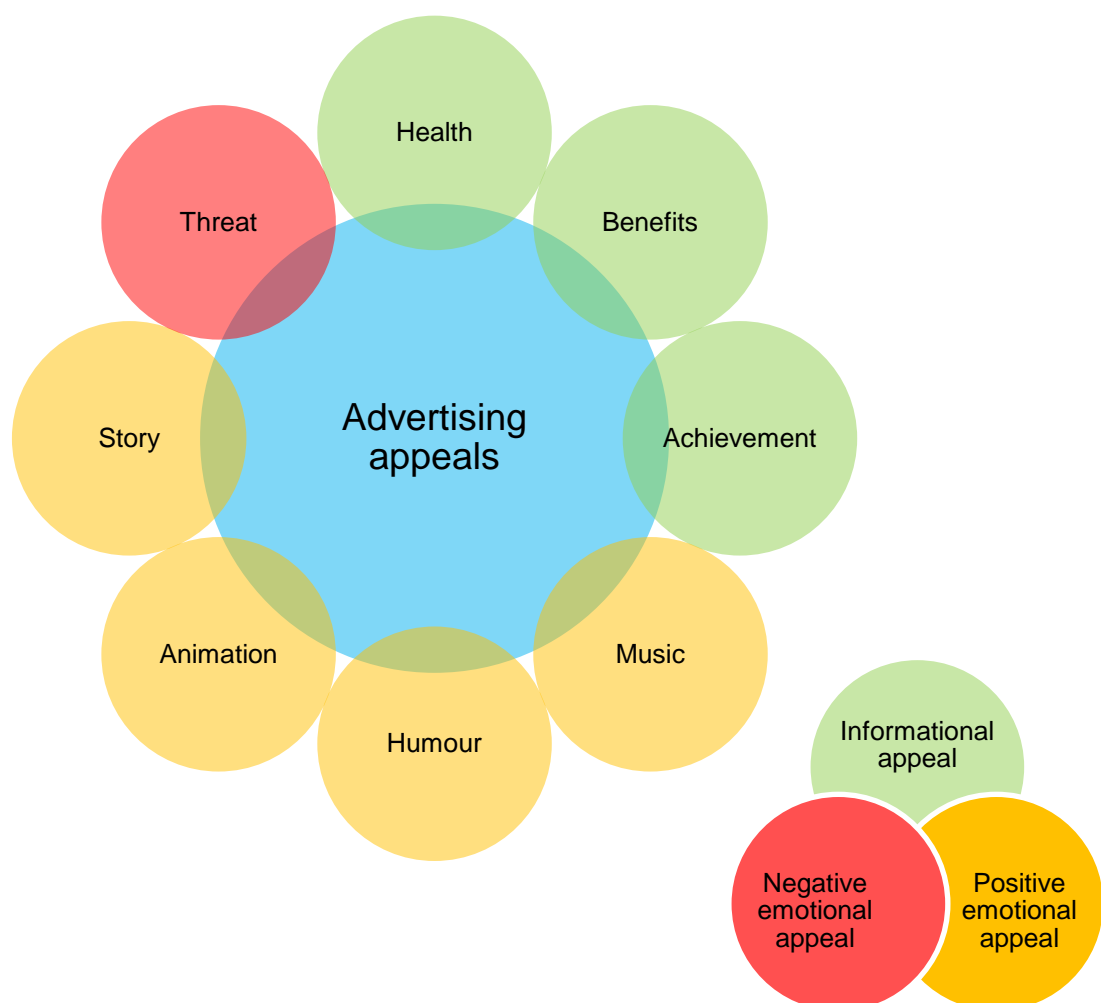


Figure 9.3: Types of advertising appeals used in the adolescents' advertisements (Sherrington, 2016).

Importantly, advertisement 6 (see section 8.7) has parents as its primary target audience. This confirms Higby and Mascarenhas' (1993) contention that given parents' informative influence upon adolescents, advertising targeting adolescents should also be targeted to their parents. When it comes to advertising healthy eating, this thesis recommends the two-pronged approach to healthy eating messages proposed by Chan *et al.* (2009a), where the increasingly independent adolescents are targeted directly as well as indirectly via their parents.

The above discussion relates to the *presentation* of advertising content. The thesis has also delivered insight in order to inform policy-making regarding the *content* itself. Consequently, in response to whether they consider food advertising to be helpful in guiding their selection of healthy foods, the 12-year-old adolescents from both countries stated that most food advertising is for unhealthy foods, which is also the finding of the literature review in chapter 3. Consequently, this thesis recommends that public funding is committed to promoting fruit and vegetables in a bid to shift public perception in terms of what constitutes a conventional diet, in a similar vein to strategies that have been successfully used by HFSS foods in order to "validate" and encourage their consumption (Dixon *et al.*, 2007; Goldberg and Gunasti, 2007, p. 169). Ideally, these advertisements should be scheduled during family entertainment programmes, in order to communicate not only with adolescents, but also with their parents in line with the two-pronged targeting approach recommended above. This would contribute towards collective efficacy and provide much-needed facilitators of healthful behaviour within the socio-structural context (Bandura, 2004).

Further, in order to increase the share of voice for healthy food advertising targeting Swedish children aged 12 and above, the thesis recommends that Sweden adopts Ofcom's ruling that HFSS foods may not use television advertising in order to target the under-16s. This recommendation corresponds with the *EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2014-2020* (EU, 2014) that calls for the restriction of marketing and advertising to children (see 2.4.3). In the light of 12-year-old Swedes' awareness of sugar content in food and drinks as facilitated by the Swedish dental health service, the NHS should consider targeting British children similarly with "real statistics" in terms of pictorial representation of the number of sugar cubes in commonly consumed foods. As in the Swedish case, dentists' waiting rooms represent low-cost venues for such communications.

The stage 1 focus groups and the collage construction in stage 2 demonstrated the importance of branding to the adolescents. As explained in section 9.5, HFSS foods supported by powerful branding provide fierce competition to healthy foods. The discourse of some English adolescents in the early focus groups made reference to the importance of food brands and

the ability of brands to encourage trial of new, related products on the basis of brand trust. What is more, for some of the 12-year-old Swedish adolescents, aspects such as *organic* and *locally sourced* were seen as valuable and able to deliver trustworthy, genuine foods. McAlister and Cornwell's (2010) research demonstrates that brands are important for the formation of eating habits. Even very young children may use brand names to determine which foods are likely to taste good and make attributions about consumers of different food brands, indicating that food consumption may be used to promote and maintain a chosen self-image. It follows that brands instilling healthy eating may be used effectively from a young age.

Given the importance placed on brands by the adolescents and the recommendation that advertisements for healthy eating should encourage elaboration of a substantive argument, a further recommendation of the thesis is the development of an identity around fresh fruit and vegetables (at present, these product categories are mostly unbranded). This could be done akin to the marketing of Pink Lady apples, where the apple variety is being turned into the brand or by developing and promoting the brand around a local connection, as is the case for Yorkshire Forced Rhubarb. In Sweden, where applicable, concepts such as 'locally sourced' and KRAV-certification could form part of a central argument and be used akin to brands. Particular to the fieldwork site in England, it seems that Ormskirk's location in the "salad bowl of England" provides an excellent opportunity for the socio-structural environment (Bandura, 2004) to establish food trust as part of a local connection, as well as promoting organic certification where possible. Such communications should be directed also to parents, recognising their important role as socialisation agents for food (Ekström, 2010) and the appropriate two-pronged communications strategy outlined above (Chan *et al.*, 2009a).

Another simple route forward is to extend the Change4Life campaign to target adolescents specifically. The objectives of the *Public Health England Marketing Strategy 2014 to 2017* (PHE, 2014) for 11- to 19-year-olds currently prioritise strategies associated with delaying and preventing young people from engaging in behaviours such as smoking and drinking. On leaving primary school and encountering significantly more freedom, adolescents would benefit from continued support when it comes to healthy eating. A particular sub-brand to Change4Life associated with diet and exercise for adolescents could provide a focal point of such a strategy. This would provide the relational thinking required for assisting the achievement and maintenance of what represents lifestyle behaviour (Hastings and Saren, 2003; Hastings and Domegan, 2014). By not continuing the direct targeting of young consumers beyond the age of 11, Change4Life loses its

relationship marketing approach. This may partly explain adolescents' continued weight gain (see 2.7.1) and insufficient levels of exercise (see 6.4).

9.4 Collective orientation

The fieldwork confirmed the importance of the environment – both the *immediate environment* and the *wider social context* – in facilitating/impeding the possibility of leading a healthy lifestyle (Bandura, 2004; Hastings and Domegan, 2014). Accordingly, family was confirmed as influential in terms of main meals for both nationalities. Consequently, the use of parents as an additional target audience when communicating with adolescents about healthy eating was recognised in the previous section. Adolescents from both countries also confirmed the importance of friends in the context of discretionary spending. For many, food is part of an overall social experience, where the peer group and a fast food restaurant represent other components of the overall package. For 12-year-old English adolescents, there is evidence of peer pressure to make unhealthy food choices, whereas Swedes of the same age demonstrated confidence in making healthy choices, without worrying about friends' opinions. Boys in both countries are portrayed as unhealthy. Available weight statistics do not support this to be the case and it may simply be a stereotype rooted in boys' general lack of interest in food. This is negative and unhelpful and should be addressed within food advertising.

The retail environment represents an important socialisation agent for both nationalities when it comes to discretionary spending. The Swedish 12-year-olds demonstrated engagement with the advertising campaign of Swedish national grocery retailer ICA. Hence, grocery retailers have the possibility of contributing positively towards the adoption of a healthy diet among adolescents, both within their advertising and in store. Many snack foods represent low-value, impulse purchases, with the decision made at the point-of-sale. This thesis recommends that in order to provide children with the opportunity to make an informed choice, food producers of products with added sugar should use clear labelling providing “real statistics” in terms of the number of teaspoons of sugar per single-portion pack, in accordance with advice provided by the UK Health Select Committee (BBC News, 2015b).

School enjoys an influential position as a food socialisation agent for Swedish adolescents. In the Swedish focus groups, school received second place behind family in every group, in terms of influence upon choice of food. The situation is different in England. Whereas school was highly rated in one of the groups, for the other two groups, school received a low ranking behind

both the retail environment and television advertising! It would appear that this is an important opportunity lost. This thesis recommends that the UK Department for Education considers the Swedish model, where school meals are free of charge for all primary- and high-school pupils and the menu simple and healthy, with only one set dish per day and no desserts. This would allow for consistent food socialisation messages to be communicated five days a week, with the opportunity of creating links to the school curriculum, for instance science, food technology and physical education. The Swedish model has demonstrated that it is possible to serve both locally sourced and organic foods within a tight budget (Livsmedelsakademin, 2015) and this would provide an opportunity to make communication regarding such aspects as free range, organic, fewer food miles and so on more relevant and tangible. Importantly, it would also make such foods more accessible for all children. This recommendation is in line with the *EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2014-2020* (EU, 2014) that calls for the promotion of healthier environments, especially in locations such as schools (see section 2.4.3). The cost of free school meals for all should be regarded as a strategic investment, as it would be likely to contribute towards reduced costs for the NHS in treating obesity-related illnesses.

Taken together, the above recommendations are provided in the spirit of the collective orientation/systems thinking prescribed by social marketing (Donovan and Henley, 2010; Hastings and Domegan, 2014) and would contribute towards promoting *collective efficacy* deemed as necessary by Bandura (2004) for improving the health of the nation.

9.5 Competitive orientation

Competition to the adolescents' practising of healthy eating is multi-faceted, represented by the many impediments preventing them from doing so. They live in an obesogenic environment characterised by fast-paced lifestyles with an emphasis on convenience, where readily available energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods offer an easy option. In this mediated environment, heavy promotion of such foods supported by powerful branding has served to normalise its everyday consumption. In the stage 1 focus groups, the brands featuring in the discourse of the adolescents of both nationalities almost exclusively belonged to the 'Big Five' – *pre-sugared breakfast cereal, soft drinks, confectionary, savoury snacks and fast-food outlets* (Hastings *et al.*, 2003) – and on a micro level they provide fierce *direct competition* (Hastings and Domegan, 2014) to advertising of healthy eating/foods.

The share of voice for advertisements for fruit and vegetables is modest. Substantial marketing budgets pay for integrated communications campaigns

that aim to build an emotional attachment between the brand and loyal customers. Advertising for food and drinks uses emotional appeals that do not invite cognitive elaboration on their nutritional qualities. The Coca-Cola 'Grandpa' advertisement provides a good case in point. As a soft drinks producer, it faces intense public scrutiny due to high sugar content of its products. In providing health advice to a mass market, it portrays contemporary lifestyle as a hazard to health (in a similar vein to the Change 4Life 'Be Food Smart' advertisement), in an attempt to divert the attention away from its own contribution to the obesogenic environment.

It is in this overall context that adolescents make their discretionary purchase decisions and it is this multitude of conditions that represents competition to advertising of healthy eating/foods. The 12- and 13-year-old English research participants knew that McDonald's food is unhealthy, yet their complex emotional attachment to this brand makes visits to this restaurant an important part of who they are. Accordingly, adolescents' consumer behaviour (beliefs, feelings, attitudes and intentions) represents *indirect/passive competition* (Hastings and Domegan, 2014) to social marketing. This behaviour – coupled with family, friends and the immediate environment – constitutes impediments to change. Social marketing recognises that consumers have a choice (Andreasen, 1994) and adolescents' decision to consume HFSS options may have more to do with voluntary behaviour than a perceived lack of self-efficacy!

The heavy emphasis on price within the grocery environment represents another aspect of competition. The fact that almost half of grocery purchases are for items on promotion, including multi-buy offers, has been recognised as an issue contributing to Britain's high sugar consumption (PHE, 2015). The focus group discussions of the 12-year-olds of both nationalities made plentiful references to seeking out low prices. The food environment in both England and Sweden would benefit from an orientation away from price and towards more positive aspects such as nutritional aspects, food origin, organic certification and so on. The Food and Drink Federation in the UK and the Swedish Food Federation are in a position to work with their members in order to re-orient both the food and the retail environment away from price.

9.6 Infusing SCT with core principles of social marketing

This section will review how the findings from the three fieldwork stages illuminate Bandura's (2004) model of socio-structural determinants of health behaviour, as applied within the context of adolescents and healthy eating. In doing so, some shortcomings of the model will be highlighted and some extensions will be proposed in order for the model to explain more clearly

adolescents' behaviour. These extensions also point towards mechanics for encouraging positive behaviour change. The extended model (see figure 9.6) is supplemented with a framework (see table 9.1) summarising the specific recommendations for strategic and tactical communications and persuasion strategies offered throughout this chapter.

9.6.1 An extended model of SCT

Commensurate with studies in the literature review (Sharma *et al.*, 2006; Ball *et al.*, 2009; Lubans *et al.*, 2012; Szczepanska *et al.*, 2012; Pedersen *et al.*, 2015), Bandura's (2004) original model (see figure 3.4) fits the context of adolescents and healthy eating well, with various components able to explain behaviour. Accordingly, *socio-structural factors* – immediate and more distant – provide both *facilitators* and *impediments* to a healthy lifestyle. Unsurprisingly, parents were found to facilitate healthy eating in the home environment, whereas friends may encourage consumption of unhealthy foods away from home. Schools, sports clubs and the dental health service are also in the immediate vicinity of adolescents and in the case of the Swedes, seem to fulfil important roles in encouraging positive food socialisation. Likewise, retailers, including fast food restaurants, are in the local community and it is here that adolescents exercise their power in terms of discretionary food purchases away from home.

In the distant environment, interest groups (e.g. the *Children's Food Campaign*, *Action on Sugar*, etc.) work on improving children's food health, an initiative that they share with Government. Faced with competing social and political priorities (Donovan and Henley, 2010), however, governments' actions do not always sufficiently promote the health of the nation, with the UK's Childhood Obesity Strategy (HM Government, 2016) described as heavily edited ahead of publication to satisfy business interests (Boseley, 2016; Pym, 2016; Smyth, 2016; Swinford, 2016).

Crucially, marketing communications by food/drinks brands (in the distant environment) are heavily biased in favour of unhealthful options. In the socio-structural environment, the direction of food communications is multi-way and complex involving a number of stakeholders, as depicted in figure 9.4.

successfully manage their health condition, adolescents' behaviour towards healthy eating is voluntary (as there are no immediate adversary effects from unhealthy foods). The purpose of the trigger would be to increase *saliency* and/or *relevancy* of healthy eating for adolescents. The fieldwork has suggested a number of aspects that may be used in order to trigger adolescents' thoughts around healthy eating as being important and relevant to them. These aspects are presented in figure 9.5.

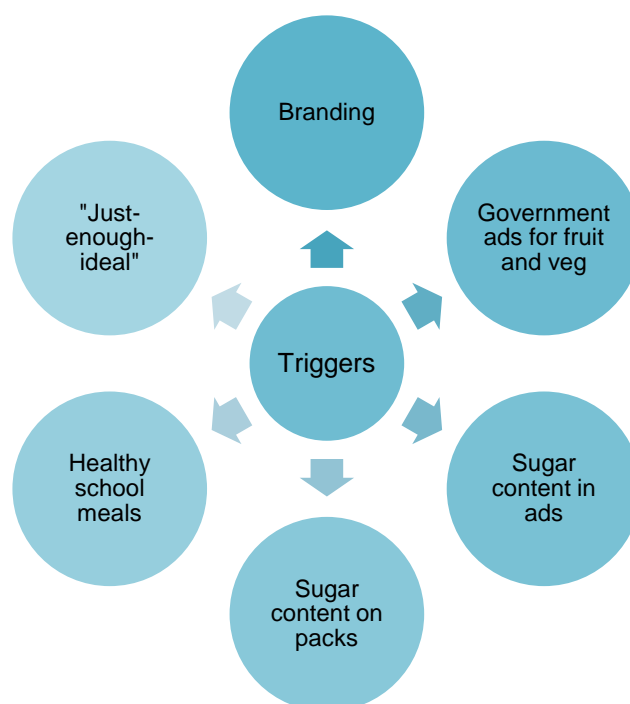


Figure 9.5: Triggers for saliency and relevancy.

Figure 9.6 depicts an extended version of Bandura's (2004) model that increases its fit to the context of adolescents and healthy eating. The amendments inject Bandura's model with social marketing thinking. Bandura's model (see figure 3.4) depicts what appears to be a transactional/selling approach, as seen from the perspective of one individual. The sequence is linear and one-directional, leading from self-efficacy through to the proposed behaviour change. The amended model introduces the additional concepts of *saliency* and *relevancy* as 'triggers' for self-efficacy. What is more, it adopts a *client orientation* (Hastings and Domegan, 2014) by recognising that the behaviour needs to represent a *mutually beneficial exchange* (Donovan and Henley, 2010) and as such offer the opportunity of a *compromise*. As found in the literature review in terms of the Scandinavian "just-enough-ideal" (Johansson *et al.*, 2009) and in the

fieldwork with Swedish participants' use of the term "lagom" (a Swedish word to denote "just the right amount"), behaviour change that offers flexibility may be more realistic to bring about and maintain.

Further, Bandura's model appears to depict an isolated behaviour. Recognising that dietary habits may require long-term effort to change and maintain, the extended model introduces *relational thinking* (Hastings and Saren, 2003; Hastings and Domegan, 2014) and the concepts of *time* and *reinforcement*. Hence, human behaviour which is successfully changed over time develops into a *lifestyle*. A successfully maintained *lifestyle*, in turn, will serve to strengthen *self-efficacy*. In the extended model, influences are bi-directional. For instance, successful *behaviour* will serve to verify and reinforce *outcome expectations* and raise the *goals* and associated *outcome expectations* for future events.

Figure 9.4 complements the model by recognising that influences are networked and web-like in a complex set-up of stakeholders. Table 9.1 lists recommendations for strategic and tactical communications and persuasion strategies to support the adoption of healthy eating among adolescents.

9.6.2 The value of the extended model in a digital environment

The components of the extended model of SCT are equally applicable within today's digital environment and can be used in order to describe both challenges and opportunities associated with adolescents and healthy eating. The characteristics of some of the factors demonstrate differences. For instance, in the digital environment family is likely to exert less influence, with friends and even strangers having more input. The socio-structural context stretches out on a truly global scale and to date has provided a low-cost, largely unregulated space for HFSS advertising to target young consumers. With the possibility of UK-associated HFSS advertising facing the same rules online as on UK television (CAP, 2016; Gwynn, 2016c), the online environment may offer more opportunity for the development of *collective efficacy* in adopting healthy eating. The digital environment offers potential in terms of providing *triggers* of *saliency* and *relevancy* in the extended model. For instance, government advertising for fruit and vegetables can target otherwise hard-to-reach audiences and there is scope for stakeholders such as governments, schools and sports clubs to integrate their efforts with the aim of achieving synergistic effects across diet and exercise. Healthy brands may take on a more active role as socialisation agents, encouraging dialogue and engagement and even becoming part of the *immediate environment*. Efficacious adolescents may display their goals

and achievements publicly in order to enhance their self-efficacy and inspire others.

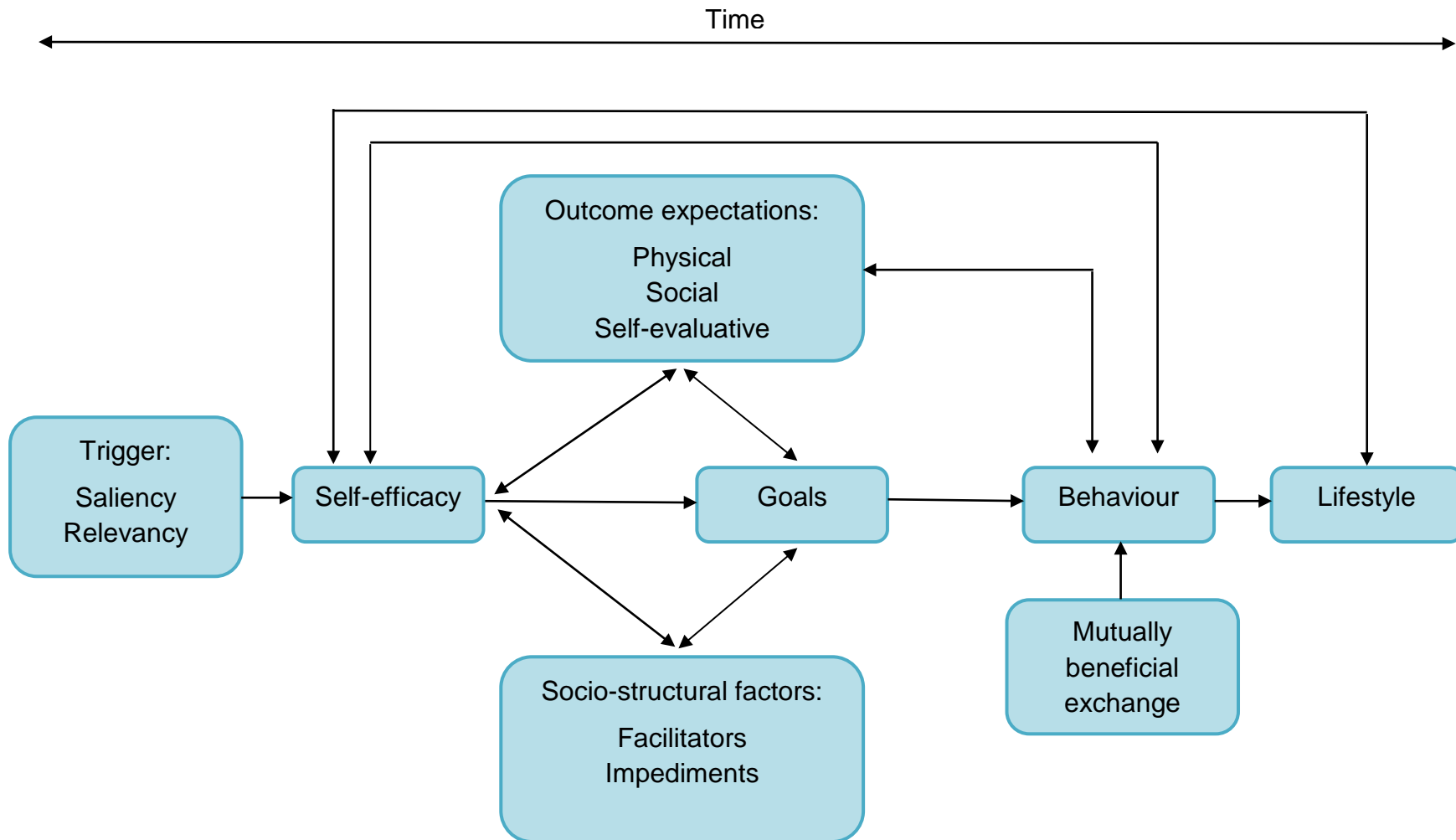


Figure 9.6: Extended model of SCT (adapted from Bandura, 2004, p. 146).

Strategic communications and persuasion strategies	Tactical communications and persuasion strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Government-sponsored increase in advertising of fruit and vegetables as well as educational messages boosting health literacy among adolescents and parents. •Curtail HFSS advertising for the under 16's in Sweden. •Advertising codes to stipulate the use of "real statistics" in food and drink advertising targeting children (e.g. sugar content in teaspoon measures). •Extension of the Change4Life brand to a sub-brand specific to adolescents and a healthy lifestyle (diet and exercise). •Brand building within the food/drink industry around aspects such as 'organic' with associated educational opportunities. •Use of "real statistics" on food/drink labelling at the point-of-sale. •Adoption of the Swedish model of free school meals to all school children in the UK with links to the school curriculum. •Removal of price emphasis within the grocery environment. •Retailers, the dental health service and sports clubs to take on more powerful roles as socialisation agents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Use of high-quality (informative/creative) health-related advertising messages to encourage persuasion through the central route. •Provide health appeals that are easy to understand by translating complex arguments into "real (visual) statistics". •Use of issue-relevant peripheral cues to keep the message "fun" and prevent message rejection. •Facilitate adolescents' making of an informed choice regarding food/drinks. •Consider steering away from the healthy versus unhealthy dichotomy; the Scandinavian "just-enough-ideal" provides an alternative message framing. •Use of age-appropriate tone of voice. •Use of concise copy and striking visuals. •Engender a feeling of empowerment. •Target adolescents directly as well as indirectly via advertising directed at their parents. •Address negative stereotyping of boys as unhealthy in advertising.

Table 9.1: Strategic and tactical communications and persuasion strategies.

Chapter 10, which follows next, will re-visit the research aim and objectives reviewed in chapter 1. The chapter will review the main contributions to knowledge made by the thesis. The limitations of the study will be recognised and suggestions for future research will be made.

Chapter 10 Conclusions and the way ahead

10.1 Introduction

Working from a social constructionist perspective (Hackley, 2001), this thesis set out to explore how to advertise healthy eating to young adolescents as seen from their perspective. Adolescents resident in England and Sweden joined a three-year longitudinal study at the age of 12. A key assumption of social constructionism is that meaning is a social construction, which is discursively constructed through language. Within the thesis, 'language' refers not only to talk, text and advertising copy, but also to visual images and sound. The adolescents have been recognised as agentive social citizens (Prout and James, 1997; James *et al.*, 1998; Christensen and Prout, 2005) and the thesis has sought to conduct the research *with* the adolescents, who during the three fieldwork events have enjoyed the status of "co-creators of knowledge" (Kellet, 2014, p. 24). In the spirit of Hackley's (2001, p. 57-58) epistemological metaphor of a "construction yard" of conceiving knowledge (see section 4.4), the study has used a varied and creative repertoire of research tools inviting the research participants to contribute new relevant insight. This final chapter will re-visit the overall research aim and the research objectives and highlight the main findings. The contributions made to knowledge will be outlined. Finally, the limitations of the study will be identified and suggestions for future research will be offered.

10.2 Research aim

The aim of this thesis was stated as:

The aim of this thesis is to approach food advertising from the perspective of young adolescents. Adopting an interpretivist research philosophy, the thesis seeks to develop in-depth appreciation of this consumer group in order to understand how to advertise healthy eating to their age group in ways that will resonate with them.

The thesis sought to give voice to adolescents, a key stakeholder group within the childhood obesity epidemic.

10.3 Research objectives

The four research objectives will be dealt with in turn, starting with the fourth objective. This objective dealt with material already available – a small set of

current television advertisements – and its purpose was to explore conventional advertising discourse from a qualitative perspective. The findings associated with this objective frame some of the empirical research and therefore it is dealt with first.

10.3.1 Qualitative insight into discourses within current television advertisements

In recognition of the lack of studies within the literature providing a qualitative exploration of the creative strategies used in food/drinks advertisements, objective 4 sought to:

Deliver qualitative insight into discourses employed within a small set of current television advertisements promoting healthy eating/living.

All three advertisements pursue discourses around *well-being* delivered within the context of “the everyday”. Out of the three, it is only the Change4Life advertisement that delivers a substantive health-relevant argument in that it addresses identified, possible health consequences associated with the consumption of specified quantities of fat in pizza and sugar in fizzy drinks. The communications objective is to encourage cognitive elaboration of the message, with persuasion to happen along the central route of the ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) encouraging behavioural change. The starker facts of sugar/fat content are presented as photographic images (against an animated backdrop), quite possibly because it would otherwise be too easy for the target audience to dismiss the message as “fiction”. The Lantmännen advertisement is the most realistic out of the three in that it presents life as it is lived (by some people) in Sweden. In doing so, it draws upon some Swedish ideals – food that is genuine and honestly produced, local produce, close relationships and so on.

It was previously argued that the Lantmännen advertisement employs the peripheral route to persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986), although powerful visual imagery demonstrates a healthy lifestyle and so delivers a message that falls somewhere in-between the two routes. Detailed discourse analysis highlighted some misleading aspects inherent in the Coca-Cola advertisement: For instance, Coca-Cola portraying itself as an authority on healthy living; persuasion along the peripheral route with late entry of Coca-Cola into the advertisement; the use of the full-sugar version of Coca-Cola. Embedding these aspects within a context of “the everyday” seeks to normalise (Goldberg and Gunasti, 2007) consumption of Coca-Cola. Given the ostensibly good intentions of Coca-Cola (promoting a healthy lifestyle), a multi-layered advertisement of this type may be challenging for an adolescent audience to unpick.

Although limited in scope, the qualitative analysis of the verbal and visual micro events played out in these advertisements points to the importance of a more critical discussion around advertising of this kind. Some suggestions for how this may be achieved is provided in the section on future research below (see 10.6).

10.3.2 Adolescents' self-perception as consumers

The first research objective read:

From the perspective of 12-14-year-old English and Swedish adolescents, investigate how they perceive themselves as consumers.

It was mainly the first two stages of the study that delivered insight here, the second stage especially, which gave the 13-year-old participants the opportunity to profile themselves as consumers. As 12-year-olds, both groups regarded themselves as “older children”. The consumer collages constructed by the 13-year-old participants gave a rich visual and verbal picture of a group of connected consumers, for whom the peer group is of central importance and who are motivated by experiences. In the context of food and their own discretionary spending, these consumers take risks and purchases appear for the most part to be exempt from a healthy approach. What is more, for them food fulfils a number of functions. Accordingly, discretionary food purchases may deliver a *taste experience* tied up with a *social experience* at a fast food restaurant, accompanied by the opportunity of *independence* away from parents. In the eyes of the adolescents, fast food brands fulfil an important role in facilitating these types of experiences and from a social marketing perspective, they provide *direct competition* (Hastings and Domegan, 2014) to healthy eating. Socio-structural factors such as the peer group present impediments to healthy living (Bandura, 2004) in that there is an expectation that adolescents will consume unhealthy food in a social context.

10.3.3 Dominant discourses in relation to food advertising/healthy eating

The second research objective sought to:

Identify and characterise the dominant discourses in relation to food advertising/healthy eating among adolescents aged 12-14 in England and Sweden.

This objective derived from the philosophical perspective of social constructionism that holds that *meaning* is a social construction and reality is

discursively constructed through *language* (Hackley, 1998). This ontological lens makes both the *client* and *collective orientations* of social marketing of relevance, as well as the *competitive orientation* in terms of aspects that may compete with the adoption of healthy eating (Hastings and Domegan, 2014). Given that the thesis understands as *language* talk, text, advertising copy, images and even music, and discourse analyses were conducted on the data generated in all three stages of the study, the thesis has reported on an expanse of discourses – only a selection of the most prominent are reviewed here.

12-year-old English and Swedish adolescents demonstrated a lack of enthusiasm around advertising for everyday foods. To be of value, such advertising must be entertaining. Swedish grocery retailer ICA had successfully created a loyal following among the Swedish participants, whose lively exchange indicated a form of social consumption of these advertisements (Ritson and Elliott, 1995; 1999). Both nationalities demonstrated a reasonable awareness around the concept of healthy eating, albeit with some indication of a lack of urgency associated with its implementation and evident knowledge gaps around such aspects as carbohydrates. Accordingly, whilst the knowledge/skills required for efficacious behaviour change (Bandura, 2004) were in evidence, the triggers necessary for activating self-efficacy seemed to be missing for some. This appeared especially to be the case for the English participants. The Swedish participants spoke with confidence about the amounts of free sugars in various foods and drinks, by virtue of a communications campaign by the dental health service. The discourse of the Swedes contained many references to such concepts as *organic*, *local produce* and *food miles*, aspects that were absent from the English participants' discourse. Both nationalities shared an understanding of McDonald's food as unhealthy. However, the English adolescents demonstrated an emotional involvement with this particular brand, which seemed to override some of the concerns that they did express around the nutritional quality of the food. Importantly, a large number of the food/drinks brands permeating the discourse of both nationalities belonged to the 'Big Five' – *pre-sugared breakfast cereal*, *soft drinks*, *confectionary*, *savoury snacks* and *fast food outlets* (Hastings *et al.*, 2003).

The collages of the 13-year-old consumers perpetuated some of the discourses encountered in the first stage of the study, with the collages mainly containing images of discretionary foods and ample references to fast food brands and other HFSS options.

When the participants turned 14, both nationalities were highly critical of the Coca-Cola 'Grandpa' advertisement. Unlike two years prior, the English participants demonstrated unprompted criticism. This may have followed

from their further consumer socialisation accompanied by enhanced marketplace persuasion knowledge (Wright *et al.*, 2005) or, as proposed by this thesis, an instance of a product/brand for which topic and agent knowledge enabled an enhanced level of persuasion knowledge (Wright *et al.*, 2005), resulting in boosted scepticism virtue of contextual familiarity (or indeed a combination of furthered consumer socialisation and familiarity-enabled scepticism). For both the English and Swedish participants, it was clear that a creative approach that was perceived as directed to younger children was not acceptable and lead to at least partial message rejection for the Change4Life advertisement.

10.3.4 Creative appeals for promoting healthy eating to adolescents

The third research objective amounted to:

Ascertain what message formats and advertising appeals are appropriate to use in messages promoting healthy eating/foods to young adolescents. This will partly be based on creative contribution provided by the participants themselves

The thesis has analysed six advertisements (three posters and three films) promoting healthy eating designed by the participants. These advertisements suggest the appropriateness of a strong, simple message delivered via copy/dialogue/voice-over, accompanied by striking visuals. The advertising message needs to deliver an issue-relevant argument (e.g. a health appeal) that encourages cognitive elaboration and persuasion along the central route (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Health/nutrition statistics are usefully translated into “real statistics”; a simple, visual representation (visual statistics), for instance using sugar cubes to denote amount of sugar. This target audience is demanding when it comes to both informative and creative aspects of the advertising message. In terms of the format of the message, the six advertisements differ in their approach in terms of depicting options and inviting/prescribing choices. Consequently, the delivery of the advertising messages range from fully balanced to a fairly one-sided portrayal of “preferred” lifestyles and from free choice to one prescribed, appropriate choice. The advertisements can all be placed on a continuum from the informational to the emotional. In terms of the advertising appeals used within the advertisements, they fall into three groups – *health-related* (used by all); *threat-related* (commonly used in varying strengths) as well as *animation, story, humour* and *music appeals*. The latter four appeals work in a support function, deployed in the role of delivering for the most part *issue-relevant peripheral cues* (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986).

10.4 Contributions to knowledge

A significant contribution offered by this thesis is articulated within the research aim, namely that the empirical research has been conducted from the perspective of the young adolescents themselves. Consequently, the research gives voice to the adolescents – a primary stakeholder group in the obesity debate – who tend not to get much of a say in matters that concern them. Their voice can be read directly in quotations, in the visuals in the consumer collages, as well as in the participant-designed advertisements. It is also conveyed by the researcher in the analysis of their discourse. The thesis makes some specific knowledge contributions to the domains of *academic theory*, *research methodology* and in terms of implications for *policy and practice*.

10.4.1 Contributions to academic theory

Contributions to social cognitive theory:

The thesis has demonstrated the applicability of Bandura's (2004) social cognitive theory (SCT) model within the context of adolescents and healthy eating in two European countries. However, it has also highlighted some key shortcomings of the model, which means that it does not fully explain adolescents and their behaviour towards healthy eating. Accordingly, the original model (see figure 3.4) shows a linear, one-directional process from an individual's self-efficacy through to the proposed behaviour. What is more, the model depicts an isolated behaviour and suggests that such behaviour is contingent upon self-efficacy.

The thesis makes a contribution by extending the model in a number of ways, by incorporating key principles of social marketing. Accordingly, the extended model introduces *relational thinking* (Hastings and Saren, 2003), recognising that it may take significant, long-term effort to change eating habits, which then need to be maintained. Successful behaviour change, which is perpetuated over time, consolidates the behaviour into a *lifestyle*. The extended model recognises that some flows are *two-directional*. Hence, successful behaviour confirms, or may even exceed, perceived outcome expectations, which may then lead to the subsequent setting of more challenging goals. What is more, a successfully maintained lifestyle – in addition to individual, successful behaviour events – reinforces self-efficacy. Accordingly, the extended model adds the strategically important elements of *time* and *reinforcement*.

Further, the extended model introduces further marketing thinking by specifically recognising that successful behaviour change is contingent upon a *mutually beneficial exchange* (Hastings and Domegan, 2014). This invites the concept of *compromise* and so increases the likelihood of behaviour change. Additionally, the new model recognises that self-efficacy in itself may not be sufficient to realise behaviour change. For adolescents, self-efficacy needs to be triggered by *saliency* and *relevancy* of the concept of healthy eating. The fieldwork suggested that a significant part of the communications challenge rests with these two concepts.

These extensions to the model prompt a more consumer-oriented and strategic approach to behaviour change, assisting in the design of more realistic and sustainable behaviour change programmes. The thesis proposes that the extended model applies within a digital environment and is also likely to work in other contexts associated with behaviour change and with an adult target audience also.

Contributions to persuasion theory:

The thesis did not directly examine the utility of the ELM (Petty and Caccioppo, 1986) in explaining adolescents' processing of advertising. However, it is possible to see and gauge whether an advertisement uses strong or weak arguments (McAlister and Bargh, 2016) and so some of the thesis findings are of relevance to theories associated with dual routes to persuasion.

The advertisements designed by the participants present arguments of varying strength, but tend to encourage the intended target audience to elaborate upon a health-related message. They do so by either modelling positive outcomes associated with a healthy diet or using fear-inducing threat appeals, warning about undesirable consequences resulting from not engaging in behaviour change. As the participants had been instructed to design advertisements to communicate with their own age group, this does suggest that they are of the opinion that persuasion along the central route would be most appropriate. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) maintain that the use of the central route is contingent upon the audience being both *motivated* and *able* to process issue-relevant arguments. The fieldwork suggested that the adolescents possess the requisite knowledge, but may lack the motivation, as they find food in general quite uninspiring. This could tentatively mean that the ELM does not provide a good fit with adolescents and persuasion to eat healthily. But there are other explanations for this outcome. The finding does confirm Livingstone and Helsper's (2004) contention that adolescents are most likely to be persuaded by the central

route when it comes to food advertising, due to their increased capability to engage with more complex advertising messages in their role as reflective consumers (Roedder John, 1999). This argument, however, overlooks the aspect of motivation.

Another explanation may simply be that the adolescents' choice of creative approach mirrors convention within social marketing, where both incentive and threat appeals are commonly used (Donovan and Henley, 2010). Another reason emanates from Petty and Wegener's (1999) extensive clarification of the ELM, where they contend that how message arguments are treated is down to *involvement*. It follows that someone with a low level of involvement may still engage with an issue-relevant argument, but not elaborate on it to the same extent as someone, who is highly involved. This would mean that the findings of this thesis align with Petty and Wegener's (1999) proposal of persuasion existing along a continuum. Another possibility is that these adolescents, armed with reasonable health knowledge, would simply dismiss as not credible an advertisement promoting healthy eating without the provision of strong enough arguments. This would at least partly confirm McAlister and Bargh's (2016) finding that weak arguments would dissuade children from thinking positively about a breakfast cereal. Importantly, the participant-designed advertisements refute suggestions in the literature that on the basis that unhealthy foods advertising appears to work, advertising for healthy foods may adopt the same strategies (e.g. Folta *et al.*, 2006; Kelly *et al.*, 2006; Dias and Agante, 2011; Puggelli and Bertolotti, 2014).

Contributions towards consumer socialisation theory:

Whilst it has been suggested that the age of 12 represents a milestone in young consumers' development of advertising literacy, there is far from consensus in the literature that 12-year-olds can defend themselves against persuasive advertising (Livingstone and Helsper, 2006; Chan *et al.*, 2009a; Verhellen *et al.*, 2014). The findings from the fieldwork suggest that it is right to take a cautious approach when it comes to 12-year-olds and recognise that not everyone is able to exercise spontaneous scepticism of advertisements, underpinned by robust marketplace persuasion knowledge.

By virtue of a longitudinal perspective, the research indicated that persuasion knowledge is still developing between the ages 12 and 14. Whereas the participants appeared to be in possession of appreciation of *selling intent* at the age of 12, not everyone seemed to appreciate *persuasive intent*. Some of the 12-year-old English participants required prompting in order to engage in an evaluative discussion of the advertisements. This indicates that young

adolescents are still vulnerable to television advertising and may require further protection. Two years later, at the age of 14, most participants were highly critical of the Coca-Cola advertisement. However, this may have followed from *persuasion knowledge* and *topic knowledge* being closely intertwined with *agent knowledge*. Hence, this scepticism may have been brand-enabled and singularly applicable to a well-known, global brand, meaning that adolescents may still be vulnerable to persuasion agents (brands) that are less well-known.

The first fieldwork stage with the Swedish adolescents provided the unique opportunity to explore their perceptions of and relationship to television advertisements at a point in time when they had just reached an age when they themselves could be directly targeted. They demonstrated persuasion knowledge that in some respects appeared more advanced than that of the English adolescents, for instance through display of unprompted scepticism regarding advertisements. This finding suggests that children are not dependent upon advertising directly aimed at them, in order to develop persuasion knowledge and learn to be consumers. This has implications for policy, as described in 10.4.3. This thesis focuses on television advertising, but other factors may also have contributed towards the differences between the English and Swedish adolescents. For instance, section 2.7.2 refers to research (Ipsos MORI/UNICEF, 2011) reporting that whereas British parents struggled to provide their children with time and attention, family time in Sweden was more extensive. Swedish parents may quite simply have more opportunity to contribute positively towards their children's consumer socialisation.

10.4.2 Contributions to research methodology

Overall, this thesis demonstrates a number of characteristics that makes it novel within the subject domain. Accordingly, this cross-national study is *interpretivist*, taking a *social-constructionist perspective*. It is conducted from the *adolescents' viewpoint* wherever possible and it is *longitudinal* in scope. Its emphasis upon language extends to the *visual* and much analysis has been conducted using *discourse analysis*. The thesis makes two particular contributions to research methodology:

Contribution to collage construction methodology:

The thesis demonstrates how collage construction may be used within a social constructionist perspective in order to develop deep participant-centred consumer insight and how the output can be made more accessible

to interested parties. The thesis introduces a hermeneutic approach to analysis, where the collages are read as a visual cultural story within the social constructionist perspective of the *distributed self* (Wetherell and Maybin, 1996). Here, language, talk and discourse are seen as the raw materials for the construction of the self through interaction with others. The thesis brings these *socially constructed consumers* to life through the empirically sourced narrated vignettes. This method of analysis represents a contribution within the collage construction literature, which has been criticised for lack of guidance when it comes to collage interpretation (Pachler, 2014).

Contribution towards digital research methodology:

The thesis demonstrates how the online discussion wall of Padlet can be used effectively with young adolescents, providing a free-of-charge platform that can be used cross-nationally. Crucially, this platform may be considered as providing a safe online field-site, as each Padlet will need to be set up by the researcher and receives a complex, randomised URL. Padlet provided yet another mouthpiece for the adolescents to express their own voice. Importantly, Padlet facilitated communication in the type of media setting that Norman and Yip (2012) describe as youth friendly and social in nature, with consequent opportunities for positive engagement. Additionally, Padlet may have encouraged a more even contribution from the participants (dealing with the potential issue of a small number of individuals dominating a physical focus group discussion). The availability of ready-transcribed pdf files of the Padlets removed the need for analysis of unclear exchanges, frequently required during the transcription of audio-recorded focus groups. The thesis demonstrates successful synchronous application of this tool; suggestions for asynchronous use are provided in 10.6.

10.4.3 Implications for policy and practice

The thesis findings make a number of contributions with implications for policy and practice. These will be presented in relation to figure 10.1, a visual overview of key stakeholder groups first introduced in chapter 2.

All stakeholders depicted in figure 10.1 make up the socio-structural context (Bandura, 2004) and have the potential to act as *facilitators* when it comes to encouraging the adoption and maintenance of a healthy diet.

For some groups, such as the *Children's Food Campaign* and *Action on Sugar* this is their main purpose in their position as *interest groups* and many of the findings in the thesis are of relevance to their lobbying work. Hence,

the finding that adolescents at the age of 12 may still be developing their persuasion knowledge supports the *Children's Food Campaign's* quest to protect children from “junk food” marketing and the Swedish model for school meals is instructive for their campaign for better school food. For *Action on Sugar*, the adolescents' varying knowledge of sugar content and their general uncertainty around carbohydrates support the objectives of this interest group. Other stakeholder groups could make a significantly more positive contribution in terms of fulfilling a facilitating role, as will be highlighted in places in the following discussion.

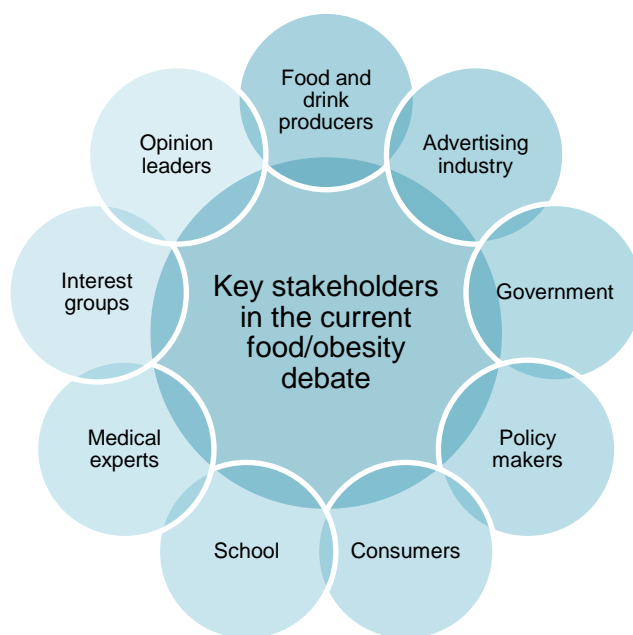


Figure 10.1: Key stakeholders in the current food/obesity debate (Sherrington, 2016).

As for *food and drinks producers* (including food retailers with their own brands) and the *advertising industry*, the findings of this thesis show that adolescents are demanding consumers of food advertising. They frequently express boredom associated with food advertising, placing sophisticated demands on production characteristics. The adolescents' own design-work in this study demonstrates that unlike for HFSS advertising, advertising for healthy eating requires a strong argument, communicating the health-benefits associated with a healthy diet.

If children are to be marketed to, then any marketing communication should facilitate an *informed choice*. This study has demonstrated the importance of translating complex health-related messages into communications that are

easy for young adolescents to understand. Accordingly, to enable adolescents to engage in an informed choice, advertisers are advised to use “real statistics” – essentially a clear, visual measure of the amount of, for instance, added sugar in a product. To ensure compliance, this should be incorporated into the British Code of Advertising Practice (BCAP) (BCAP, 2010, sections 3.9-13.12). Given the importance of the point-of-sale as evident in this study, a similar approach with a visualisation of sugar content on product packaging is appropriate.

The literature review recognised that there are relatively few studies in the research domain of children and food advertising investigating the creative appeals used from a qualitative perspective. Despite its limited scope, the discourse analysis of three television advertisements for Coca-Cola, Change4Life and Lantmännen makes contributions in this area. The analysis has demonstrated the complexity of the advertising discourse used, by disassembling the complex “grammar” of visuals, movement, music, text and talk in each advertisement. This analysis has also demonstrated the power of the visual in the advertisements, again an aspect which has received little attention in the research domain. For instance, in the Coca-Cola ‘Grandpa’ advertisement we are led to believe that the advertisement is for the encouragement of a healthy lifestyle. It requires mental engagement to spot and process the fact that the Coca-Cola that we see being consumed in the advertisement is the full-sugar version, not the low/no-calorie versions, which only appear at the end. As fizzy drinks tend to represent low-involvement decisions, we are unlikely to stretch to the effort of unpicking the various message components and engage in a critical analysis of the advertisement.

What this type of analysis does show is that whilst HFSS advertising is problematic, this type of advertisement may be even more so, by virtue of a conventional advertising message being cloaked in what to the uninvolved appears to be a socially responsible advertisement. Consequently, this thesis has put the spotlight on one of these types of advertisements. It has highlighted the relevance of research of this kind and the importance of it reaching out to primary stakeholders, such as young adolescents and, more generally, contributing to a wider, critical discussion of food advertising in society. This is discussed further in section 10.6.

This study found the Swedish adolescents to be loyal followers of the television advertising of Swedish grocery retailer ICA. The implication is that ICA is in a prime position to be able to act as an opinion leader/facilitator for a healthy diet and use both their television advertising and the in-store environment as media for this campaign. The study also confirmed the importance of brands to English and Swedish adolescents alike, although the brands occurring in their discourse tended to belong to the ‘Big Five’ (Hastings *et al.*, 2003). The Swedish adolescents frequently mentioned

aspects such as organic produce and food grown in the community involving fewer food miles, as well as the KRAV-label (organic certification [KRAV, 2015]). It follows that aspects such as these could be emphasised as part of products' brand identity – for food producers' brands and retailers' own brands alike – in advertising targeting adolescents. Whereas the English adolescents' discourse did not make reference to such foods, the location of the English fieldwork site in a major agricultural region suggests the opportunity to start instilling similar thinking on the part of this group of English adolescents. This could also form part of a government-led communications campaign for the consumption of fruit and vegetables as suggested below, made more relevant to the adolescents with a connection to the local community.

The discourse of both English and Swedish adolescents was characterised by a preoccupation with low prices, which may not be that surprising given that they operate from a finite supply of pocket money. However, this mind-set is likely also to be fuelled by the emphasis on price promotions and multi-buy offers within the retail trade. As a result, the thesis recommends that industry bodies such as the Swedish Food Federation and the British Food and Drink Federation, as well as major grocery retailers in both countries, back away from price promotions and instead concentrate upon the quality and integrity of the food. This advice confirms that provided by Public Health England (2015) in their report *Sugar Reduction – The Evidence for Action* (see section 2.5.1) that recommends the removal of buy-one-get-one-free offers, as well as less marketing aimed at children in store.

When it comes to message formats and advertising appeals appropriate for promoting healthy eating to young adolescents, the thesis findings suggest that such advertisements should present *issue-relevant arguments* of an *informational nature* to encourage persuasion along the central route (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Such a substantive argument may be presented using *health, benefits* or *achievement appeals*. These are to be delivered via *vicarious modelling* (Bandura, 2009) and function akin to incentive appeals (Donovan and Henley, 2010). The thesis proposes a range of *issue-relevant peripheral cues* of a *positive emotional nature* – *music, humour, animation* and *storytelling appeals* – to be used in a support function to substantive, issue-relevant arguments. What is more, *threat appeals* are proposed to deliver *negative emotional appeals* to be used alongside the central, issue-relevant arguments, in order to capture attention and encourage elaboration on the advertising message.

When it comes to *government* and *policy makers*, the thesis found that in the context of their own discretionary spending, adolescents' health literacy is over-ruled by a situation characterised by Kline (2010) as one where brand affection disarms scepticism and persuasion knowledge. On the basis of this

apparent suspension of health literacy and persuasion knowledge, the thesis proposes the appropriateness of initiatives to reduce marketing of unhealthy foods to young adolescents:

Given that Swedish children do not appear to have missed out by the Swedish ban on television advertising targeting those younger than 12, restricting advertising targeted at children represents one way in which to reduce commercial pressure placed upon them and a strategy with which to address childhood obesity. This needs to be furthered evidenced by research representing Swedish 12-year-olds in general, which is addressed in section 10.6. Further, in the light of the evidence that children are still developing their persuasion knowledge at the age of 12-14, Sweden should consider adopting the Ofcom regulation regarding HFSS advertising, where such advertising may not target those younger than 16.

In recognition of the fact that the 12-year-old participants' discourse was punctuated by brands belonging to the 'Big Five' and that the participants explicitly commented on the lack of advertising for fruit and vegetables, government should invest in such advertising with the purpose of normalising the consumption of these products. What is more, the Change4Life brand appears not to target adolescents with the objective of encouraging healthy eating and exercise. This study suggests that adolescents would benefit from an extension of the Change4Life campaign, promoting healthy eating and exercise. This would invoke the relational thinking associated with social marketing (Hastings and Saren, 2003) and which is a key component of the extended SCT model proposed by the thesis. It is crucial that such a campaign employs an age-appropriate advertising tone of voice.

The thesis found that adolescents may suspend their health literacy in social contexts, making them vulnerable to the marketing of powerful food brands. It also uncovered a keen presence of brands of the 'Big Five' in their discourse. These findings, in combination with the Change4Life campaign not seeking a continued relationship with the age group and statistics demonstrating a high incidence of overweight/obesity among them (see section 2.7.1), indicate that the Childhood Obesity Strategy (HM Government, 2016) is not robust enough. Consequently, it needs to widen its remit to specifically encompass adolescents (not simply younger children). Appropriate measures would include adoption of the recommendation by the House of Commons Health Select Committee to extend the 9pm television watershed to apply to HFSS advertising (BBC News 2015b) and Public Health England's proposal of a removal of buy-one-get-one-free offers (PHE, 2015).

The adolescents themselves in their role as *consumers* belong to the main stakeholder group of children in the childhood obesity epidemic. The thesis

has uncovered that food fulfils a range of functions for adolescent consumers. On a fundamental level, food falls into two basic categories: One usage occasion is represented by main meals consumed at home/school and the other is that of discretionary food consumption, essentially snack occasions funded by pocket money. Naturally, parents' main control lies with main meals, but they may also have an influence over discretionary consumption, meaning that parents represent another important target audience for communications encouraging healthy eating among adolescents. In conducting this study, the researcher noted the absence of adolescents' voices in matters to do with food advertising and childhood obesity. Consequently, the thesis calls upon the inclusion of adolescents in addressing childhood obesity issues. Such activities recognise adolescents as agentive social citizens (Prout and James, 1997), who are in the best position to be able to advise on such aspects as advertising messages.

School is in a prime position to be able to communicate the importance of healthy eating. The focus groups conducted in Sweden found school in second place behind family when it comes to the degree of influence upon food choice and so school fulfils the role of a very influential opinion leader/facilitator. In two of the focus groups conducted in England, school was far down the list behind both television advertising and the retail environment. The study found the Swedish model of free, healthy school lunches instrumental to this important position of school. Hence, the thesis recommends that the UK Department of Education considers a similar model to be delivered throughout compulsory school. A simple, healthy lunch would communicate a consistent health message throughout the year. It would also provide the opportunity for an integrated marketing communications approach with links to the government campaign promoting fruit and vegetable consumption, as well as a connection to local suppliers, whose (possibly organic) produce could be actively promoted as ingredients on the school menu.

Medical experts are vociferous in the obesity debate and represent expert opinion leaders. One important finding to emerge from the Swedish fieldwork was the Swedish participants' "sugar literacy" obtained from a public awareness campaign run by the dental health service. Campaign literature available in the waiting room of the local dental surgery had successfully captured the interest of the adolescents, who confidently stated the number of sugar lumps in familiar food and drink. An equivalent UK campaign would be appropriate, given the English adolescents' surprise at the sugar content in soft drinks conveyed by the Change4Life advertisement.

The above recommendations would deliver a strong set of socio-structural facilitators, generating the collective efficacy (Bandura, 2004) required for behaviour change that stands the chance of developing into lifestyles.

10.5 Limitations

The methodology chapter recognised that it would not be appropriate to evaluate this study using the criteria of *validity*, *reliability* and *generalisability*. Instead, the alternative criteria of *deep participant-centred insight*, *rigour of research design*, *transferability of creative ideas* and *authenticity* were put forward.

The study has provided *deep participant-centred insight* in relation to English and Swedish adolescents through discourse analysis of focus groups, at the time they were aged 12 and the reading of the socially constructed consumer profiles, when they were 13. However, it needs to be recognised that this knowledge remains specific to the two groups of adolescents at the two fieldwork sites.

In terms of *rigour of the research design*, the thesis has employed a variety of creative research approaches appropriate to conducting research with adolescents, supported by consultation of the research methods literature. The thesis has strived to conduct the research *with* the adolescents from their perspective and in doing so, allow for their voices to speak first-hand through the thesis. However, careful consultation of the empirical data (the adolescents' talk, text and visuals) notwithstanding, the vignettes used to provide a story around each of the socially constructed consumers in the collages, represent the words of the researcher and not the first-hand voice of the adolescents. This is further addressed in section 10.6, which provides recommendations for future research.

Section 4.6 recognised that although studies involving children conventionally recruit through school, schools as research sites may attract criticism associated with potential power relationships created by teachers' authority over children. It was pointed out, however, that the school setting enables insight into the participants' behaviour in a social environment (Banister and Booth, 2005), a premise that is central to the social constructionist perspective of the thesis. However, it has been suggested that focus groups may be seen as representing an artificial intervention (Tonkiss, 2004) that may de-contextualise cultural marketing information (Kozinets, 2002). Further, in recognition of Moisander and Valtonen's (2006) contention that knowledge is contextual, plural, contested and subject to change, the consumer collages represent an assemblage of some key aspects of the adolescents' lives, but a less coherent picture than may emerge through an ethnography. Again, this is addressed further in section 10.6.

As for the *transferability of creative ideas*, it should be noted that the advertisements designed by the participants represent concept ideas only.

Further research is needed, in order to ascertain general reception of the message formats and advertising appeals by an adolescent audience (see section 10.6). The extended SCT model, however, (see figure 9.6) in combination with the associated set of strategic and tactical communications/persuasion strategies (see table 9.1) does provide recommendations that are general in character and so is applicable to food advertising in a range of contexts and media.

The thesis has sought to ensure *authenticity* in terms of the data generated during the fieldwork events. This has been done by adopting the participants' perspective, using a range of research techniques where the participants have had the opportunity to express themselves verbally and visually. Importantly, the research in Sweden was conducted in Swedish in order to optimise the quality of the research data (Irvine *et al.*, 2008).

The discourse analysis of current television advertisements only explored three advertisements and so was limited in scope. However, the thesis argues for the value of such research and suggests future research of a similar type with a view to making it accessible to a broader audience, with young adolescents a prime target (see section 10.6).

10.6 Suggestions for future research

The thesis has proposed that even where self-efficacy exists among adolescents, it needs to be activated by a trigger, making healthy eating appear salient and relevant. A number of possible triggers has been assumed from the fieldwork data (see figure 9.5). Future research is imperative in order to uncover such motivating factors, which would enable their use in advertising campaigns.

The advertising concepts put forward by the adolescents centred on the use of incentive appeals and threat appeals. Future research should attempt to establish which approach is more effective at bringing about behaviour change; incentive appeal or threat appeal, or a combination of the two. It is proposed that such testing takes place in a focus group setting, inviting discussion around the creative ideas. What is more, the use of threat appeals in the context of advertising healthy eating needs further attention. Accordingly, further insight is needed as to the appropriate strength of threat appeals in terms of catching and holding attention, as well as their ability to encourage elaboration of a healthy eating message. What is more, the longevity of the relevance of threat appeals and the associated risk of wear-out need investigation. Given the perceived lack of enthusiasm demonstrated for food in general, it would be of interest to explore the level of involvement with which adolescents approach advertisements for healthy eating and

whether, as suggested by the fieldwork, the use of strong issue-relevant arguments are preferable over weak arguments.

The findings suggest that Swedish 12-year-olds have not been set back in terms of their consumer socialisation, as a result of the Swedish television advertising ban. A future study should conduct research with a nationally representative sample of 12-year-olds to establish whether this is the case generally in Sweden. Such research should also investigate what other benefits may come from such a ban, in addition to taking some of the commercial pressure off children.

Given the central premise of a *client orientation* in social marketing (Hastings and Domegan, 2014) and the rich data resulting from the collage construction, this thesis recommends future research of a similar nature. Such research should empower the adolescents as co-creators of knowledge (Kellett, 2014) further, by asking the adolescents to write the consumer stories. The insight provided – in their own words – would deliver value on several levels. On a fundamental level, commensurate with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNICEF, 1989), it would safeguard children's right to high standards of research about their lives, giving consideration to their views. In addition to giving them voice, it would contribute deeper understanding of their consumer characteristics and motivations, invaluable for designing food advertising messages they are more likely to listen to. Commensurate with the social constructionist ontology guiding this thesis where *meaning* is a social construction assembled through *language* (Hackley, 1998), such consumer stories would assist the gaining of further insight into their language and, by implication, further insight into them as consumers.

Section 10.5 recognised some limitations associated with conducting research in a school environment, the possibility that focus groups may de-contextualise cultural marketing information and that consumer collages may provide a mosaic of information, rather than a flowing story. Consequently, this thesis proposes that whilst still recruiting research participants through school in order to satisfy research ethics guidelines, the fieldwork is moved away from a school setting into contexts where some key activities in the adolescents' lives are played out. This could involve the researcher observing a group of adolescents visiting a fast food restaurant together or an observation of adolescents visiting a store, for the purpose of purchasing food for their own consumption in a peer context. This would allow the collection of discourse surrounding food and its functions, aspects of marketing communications, as well as the social consumption context in situ.

It has been recommended in the thesis that a positive conversation around healthy eating and food advertising is needed. The thesis has demonstrated

the value of conducting qualitative analysis of the creative strategies used within food/drinks advertisements. It is recommended that further research of this kind is conducted. Academic research within the domain of food advertising has been conducted on behalf of the WHO, government departments, policy makers and so on, in order to influence policies and legislation to protect children. However, given that research has shown (studies in the literature review and the empirical research presented in this thesis) that children may fail to see the urgency of healthy eating or may be protective of what they see as their right to choose to consume fast food, addressing them directly in their position as stakeholders would be desirable.

Academic research would be in a unique position to feed valuable knowledge into a more general discussion around food advertising that touches a wider range of stakeholders – children, their parents and school. Qualitative research dealing with the verbal and visual components in food advertisements using an approach similar to the discourse analysis presented in chapter 5, could make research accessible to these stakeholders and applicable to an everyday context of food advertisements. Such research should explore the creative messages used by unhealthy foods/drinks and contribute to the building of children's persuasion knowledge (Wright *et al.*, 2005), as well as a more critical, insightful discussion in society at large. Dissemination of academic research to a wider audience could be straight forward through the open access journal system, although it would need to be supported by more targeted initiatives in order to reach adolescents. For instance, universities' outreach activities to local high-schools could be used to ensure that the research is tapped into.

In light of the successful application of Padlet as a mouthpiece for vocalising the contributions of adolescents in a cross-national situation as described in this thesis, this online discussion board could be used in order to host discussions around research papers of the type described in the previous paragraph. By implication, this research would be asynchronous (Muratore, 2008) in character, with contributors posting comments at times convenient to them. These discussions, probably best envisaged as 'micro discussions', would have the potential to feed into and fuel a general, society-wide conversation around food advertising. Managed by academic institutions, encompassing the local community of high-schools within an overall framework of similar set-ups in a number of countries, these online discussions would provide the opportunity to conduct academic research investigating adolescents' reactions to food advertising discourse cross-nationally. Initiatives of this kind would also represent an opportunity to more actively tap the opinions of adolescents relating to childhood obesity issues, as suggested in the stakeholder discussion in section 10.4.3.

Finally, section 2.9.1 accounted for the decision to focus the thesis on television advertising in preference to a broader design encompassing new media. Consequently, future research should explore the viability of the extended SCT model in explaining adolescents' behaviour concerning healthy eating in today's digital environment. What is more, research should address how new media can be effectively employed for communicating healthy eating messages to adolescents. Such research should investigate the suitability of various new media as platforms for such messages, as well as appropriate message characteristics for each medium. Building on the findings presented in this thesis, as well as the proposals for other research initiatives outlined in this section, insight applicable to integrated marketing communications would be a valuable contribution in a bid to use marketing to address the childhood obesity challenge.

10.7 Final remarks

Hastings *et al.* (2006) have argued that the removal of food marketing does not provide the answer to encouraging people to consume a healthy diet. Rather, they maintain that the answer lies in making food marketing healthier. However, it is important to recognise that the real problem is not HFSS advertising, but HFSS products, without which there would be no need for a debate regarding HFSS advertising! Hence, what is required is an integrated approach challenging the unhealthy aspects of the "new food culture" characterised by energy-dense convenience foods (Puggelli and Bertolotti, 2014) in a bid to tackle the obesogenic environment. Here, this thesis makes a contribution by proposing an extended model of SCT, where social marketing thinking guides the development of individual and collective efficacy towards establishing and maintaining healthy lifestyles. The model is complemented by a set of communications and persuasion strategies to boost and maintain efficacy. Healthy food advertising has an important role to play in empowering young consumers to choose a healthier lifestyle. This needs to be supported by an increased share of advertising voice by fruit and vegetables facilitated by government. What is more, the academic community has an important role to play, by conducting research that is accessible and relevant to young consumers as well as their parents and that can support a critical debate of HFSS advertising and a positive conversation in the public domain around healthy eating. Taken together, these initiatives will promote collective efficacy.

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Friends



Shop environment



Print adverts



School



TV adverts



The internet



Text messages



Something else

Questionnaire for focus groups participants

Thank you for participating in this focus group. Before leaving, please respond to the questions below. The questionnaire is anonymous - you do not need to state your name.

1.	Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
2.	Birth year/month/year:	e.g. 2000/07/15
3.	Who lives in your household?	e.g. two parents and three children (including you)
4.	Do you own a mobile phone?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5.	Do you have internet access on your phone?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
6.	How much TV do you watch per day?	<input type="checkbox"/> ≤ 1 hour <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 hours <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 hours <input type="checkbox"/> 3 + hours
7.	What TV channels do you watch regularly?	
8.	Do you have your own TV in your bedroom?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
9.	Is there a computer with internet access in your household?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

PLEASE TURN OVER.

10.	Do you have your own computer with internet access at home?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
11.	How much time do you spend on the internet per day (phone and computer)?	<input type="checkbox"/> ≤ 1 hour <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 hours <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 hours <input type="checkbox"/> 3 + hours
12.	What internet sites do you regularly visit?	
13.	Do you receive 'pocket money'?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (please indicate amount below) SEK/£...../week, <u>or</u> SEK/£...../month
14.	What do you spend your 'pocket money' on?	

Design of an advert for healthy eating

Your task is to design an advertising poster that encourages members of your own age group to eat healthily. As for task 1, where you evaluated two advertisements, there are no right or wrong answers for this task. You are being asked to design advertising that communicates with your own age group. For this task, you need to work in small groups with about 3 pupils per group.

The advertising message should be an encouragement to eat healthy foods. Your task is to design an advertising poster that communicates this message in a creative way.

Think the following points through carefully:

- The advertisement should talk to your own age group. It is all about designing an advertising message that can speak directly with your age group, so that you listen.
- The advertisement does not need to deal with a particular category of food. The important thing is that the advertisement is about the encouragement of healthy eating.
- Be creative! Use text, images and photos. As the poster is digital, there are no limitations as to what may be included – music, video, etc. can really help the construction of an effective advertising poster. Think about what type of language/expression/words that are suitable for talking to your age group about this topic. What images are suitable? Is there particular music that can help communicate the message?
- In your group, try to develop a “creative idea” around “healthy eating” that you present on your poster. For instance, it could be a particular scene in the life of an ordinary young teenager or it could be about an inspirational celebrity. You decide! How can you communicate ‘healthy eating’ as something fun, inspiring, worth listening to, etc.?

When you have finished, please email your creation to:
amsherrington@uclan.ac.uk

