

A DETAILED REVIEW ON THE FOOD ADVERTISEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The food and drink industry in the US has seen children and young people as a major market force in recent years. As a result, children and young people are now being targeted at intensive and specialised food marketing and advertising. Food sellers are interested in young people as consumers because of their spending power, purchasing influence and future adult consumption. Multiple techniques and channels are used to reach young people, starting with kids, to promote brand building and to affect food purchasing behaviour. Those food marketing channels include television advertising, on-site marketing, product placements, children's clubs, the Internet, brand logos and toys and promotional activities targeted at youth, including cross-selling and tie-ins. Children's foods are mainly high in sugar and fat and are therefore inconsistent with national dietary recommendations. The objective of this paper is to examine the food advertising and marketing channels used to target children and adolescents in the United States, their impact on eating behaviour, and existing regulations and policies.

KEYWORDS: Food, Advertisement, Review

INTRODUCTION

For growth and development, health and well-being, nutrition during childhood and adolescence is crucial. [1,2] In addition, eating behaviours established during childhood and contribute to long-term health and risk of chronic disease. [3,4] Many studies consistently have demonstrated that American children and adolescents' dietary intake patterns are poor and do not achieve national dietary targets. [5-8] Moreover, trend data on US food consumption show a shift over recent decades. Children and adolescents eat more food, drink more soft drinks and snack more often away from home. [9-11] US children now get more than 50% of their calories from fat or added sugar (32 percent and 20 percent, respectively). [12]

· The growing epidemic of overweight and obesity in children is a major concern for public health. Currently 15% of American youth are overweight, with a prevalence almost twice that of children and three times that of adolescents in comparison with 1980 prevailing rates. [13] Although overweight children are at least one cardiovascular risk factor (e.g. high blood pressure, hyperlipidemia) in nearly two thirds (60%) [14], youth are witnessing increased prevalence of type 2 diabetes mellitus. [15] These trends could seriously affect the future health and productivity of the American population and contribute to healthcare costs [16-24].

Advertising is central to US food supply marketing. Marketing is defined as an activity that a company undertakes to facilitate an exchange with its customers. [25] Advertising is one type of business in the market. [25] The US food system is America's second largest advertiser (first being the car industry) and is a

leading buyer of advertisements for television, journals, magazines, poster boards and radio. [26] The reasons why the market for food advertising is so wide include: 1) food catches 12.5 percent of US consumer expenditure and therefore there is a strong competitive edge, 2) food is a repeat purchase item, and the views of consumers may change rapidly, and 3) food is one of the most highly-branded products that is a major advertising item. [26] More than 80% of US foodstuffs are branded. [27]

FOOD EXPENDITURE

In 1999, US food advertising expenditure amounted to \$7.3 billion. [27] In 1997 US publicity expenditure for various food products was: \$792 thousand-lion breakfast cereals; \$765 million for sweets and gum; \$549 million for soft drinks. \$330 million for snacks. Total candy and snacks expenditure was \$1 billion. [26] The US Department of Agriculture spent \$333 million on nutrition education, assessment and demonstrations that same year. [26] Publicity budgets for certain food, drink and fast food brands are also revealing (Table 1). While the amount of money spent on food advertising specifically for young people is unclear, estimates are available for overall US advertising for young people. Over \$1 billion is estimated to be spent on media advertising, mostly on TV. [28] More than 4.5 billion dollars is spent on youth promotions such as premiums, sampling, coupons, competitions and sweepstakes. Some \$2 billion is spent on public relations for youth, such as broadcasting and print advertising, event marketing and school relations. Moreover, approximately \$3 billion is spent on children's packaging. A major driver of heavy marketing for young people, particularly young children, is the desire to develop and develop brand awareness/identity, brand preference and brand loyalty. Marketers think brand preference starts before buying behaviour.[28] Children's brand preference appears to be associated with two major factors: (1) child positive experiences with a brand, and (2) parents like a brand. [28] Marketers are therefore stepping up their efforts to develop brand relationships with young consumers, starting with kids. [29] Salespeople know that children and pre-school children have a significant buying influence and can successfully negotiate buys using what market keters call "nag factor" or "pester power." [28] A child's first product request is made approximately 24 months old and 75% of the time the request occurs in a supermarket. The first demand in the store is breakfast cereal (47%), followed by snacks and drinks (30%) and toys (21 percent). Requests are often made for the product of the brand name. [28] Isler et al. reviewed the place, types and frequency of products requested by their mothers for 30 days by children aged 3-11 years. Over half (54%) of total children's requests included foods for snacks/desserts (24%), candy (17%), cereal (7%), fast food (4%), fruits and veg (24%). (3 percent). [30] Nearly two-thirds of all cereal applications (65 percent) were for presweetened cereals. Preschool children asked more than older children in primary school. Par-satisfaction e's was about 50% of the time for child food requests, soft drinks (60%), cookies (50%) and candy (45 percent). [28] These findings show that food advertisers spend large sums of money on children, trying to build brand loyalties and persuade them to want a specific foodstuff, starting with kids.

CONCLUSION

The nature of children's understanding of advertising is central to any discussion on food advertising for children. Many studies have shown that young children have little knowledge of the convincing intention of advertising. [24,31,32] Before 7 or 8 years of age, children tend to see advertising as fun, fun and unbiased information. [32] A understanding of the purpose of advertising usually develops when most children are 7-8 years old. Due to their level of cognitive development, many child-development researchers consider children under 8 years of age to be vulnerable to misleading advertising. [32] The heavy marketing of high-fat, high-sugar products to this age group may be regarded as exploitative since young children do not understand that advertising products are intended to be sold and they still cannot understand or evaluate the ad. Preteens between the ages of 8-10 have the cognitive ability to process advertising, but do not necessarily.

Recent reports by the United States General Accounting Office (GAO) show that food sales are the most prevalent form of business activity in schools. [46] Food sales mainly involved the sale and short-term sales of soft drinks from sales machines. The US National School of Health and Program Studies (SHPPS) showed that students in 58% of mentary schools, 83% of middle schools and 94% of high schools could buy non-100 percent juice in a sales machine, school store or snack shop. [47] A recent survey by 336 high school heads in Minnesota, USA showed that 98 percent of the school heads reported soft drink distributors for students and 77 percent had soft drinks for a school. [48] The GAO report found that the sale of soft drinks under exclusive contracts by schools or districts is the quickest-growing activity in all product sales. [46] In the United States, more than a third of primary schools, half of middle and secondary schools and nearly three fourths of high schools have a contract which allows a business to sell soft drinks in schools.

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