Children and Food:
Two experiments to investigate efficient promotion of healthy eating habits among 8 to 12-year-olds

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6th International MAPP Workshop
• Introduction

• Research
  ▪ Objective
  ▪ Conceptual framework
  ▪ Methodology
  ▪ Results
  ▪ Further research
  ▪ Limitations

• Conclusion
• Current situation
  • Obesity = public health problem (W.H.O)
    ▪ growing by 400,000 European children every year
    ▪ 70% obese when reaching adulthood
    ▪ economical consequences

• Advertising to be blamed?

• Existing middle way?

‘Social Marketing’

“the use of marketing principles and techniques to influence a target audience to voluntary accept, reject, modify or abandon a behavior for the benefit of individuals, groups or society as a whole” (Kotler, Roberto and Lee, 2002)
• Objective:
  Identify efficient ways to promote healthy eating habits among 8- to 12-year-olds.

  ▪ Practical implications

  ▪ Theoretical contributions:
    ▪ Further understanding of persuasion mechanism at work with children (Derbaix, 1982; Derbaix and Brée, 1997; Pecheux, 2001, …)
    ▪ Study the impact of negative affective reactions elicited by an ad on attitude, ‘brand attitude’, behavioral intentions and behaviors
Conceptual background (1/2)

- Why 8- to 12-year-olds?
  - 70% obese at adult age (Goldberg & Gunasti, 2007)
  - Limited addictive behavioral decisions (Peracchio & Luna, 1998)
  - Prescribers and Inverted socialization (Goletty, 1999)
  - Cognitives abilities (Piaget, 1972; Roedder-John, 1999)
  - Efficiency of obesity prevention programs (Stice, Shaw and Marti, 2006)

- Persuasion with 8- to 12-year-olds
  - Persuasive power of advertising (Hasting et al. 2003; McGinnis, Gootman and Kraak, 2006)
  - Specific hierarchy of effects of advertising (Derbaix, 1982)
• Conceptual background (2/2)
  ▪ Fear in advertising; in health related contexts; adults
    ▪ Efficiency proven (Witte & Allen, 2000; Gallopol, 2006)
    ▪ Various models developed (Janis, 1967; Leventhal, 1970; Rogers, 1983; Tanner et al. 1991; Witte, 1992)
    ▪ Limits identified and solutions proposed (Tanner et al. 1991; Witte, 1992)
  ▪ What about children?
    ▪ Macklin, 1984; Roedder-John, 1999
    ▪ Derbaix, 1982; Derbaix&Brée, 1997; Pecheux, 2001
• Methodology:
  
  ▪ Qualitative study
    
    • 80 children / face-to-face interviews
    
    • "Good" knowledge of nutrition
    
    • Main motivation to follow healthy food recommendations
      
      • Fear of social consequences
      
      • Fear of inability to practice sports (with peers)
• Methodology:
  - Hypothesis

An ad **threatening** a child of bad consequences of not having healthy food behaviors (and therefore eliciting negative affective reactions) will be **more efficient** than a **neutral ad** on ‘healthy food’ behavior (no threat/fear appeal)
• Methodology:
  - Measured variables
    (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Muehling & Lacznia, 1992);
    adapted to children (Derbaix, Blondeau & Pecheux, 1999; Pecheux & Derbaix, 1999)
    - Attitude towards the ad (Aad)
    - Attitude towards product category (Apc)
    - Behavioral intentions
    - Behaviors
    - Affective Reaction Elicited by the AD (Derbaix & Brée, 1997)
• Methodology:
  
  ▪ Experiment I
    ▪ Design
      ▪ Print media
      ▪ 178 children
    ▪ 4 experimental conditions: 4 ads
      ▪ "Social fear" ad
      ▪ "Physical fear" ad
      ▪ "Aesthetical fear" ad
      ▪ Neutral ad
  
  ▪ Results

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ad attitude</th>
<th>Attitude product category</th>
<th>Intent to consume healthy food</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ads with threats (n=148)</td>
<td>14,8</td>
<td>22,06</td>
<td>9,38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neutral ad (n=30)</td>
<td>17,8</td>
<td>20,9</td>
<td>8,88</td>
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<td>p&lt;0,05</td>
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• Methodology:
  - Experiment II
    - Design
      - TV media
      - 132 children
      - 4 experimental conditions: 3 ads + 1 control group
        - "Social fear" ad
        - "Physical fear" ad
        - Neutral ad
        - Control group
  - Results

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Aad</th>
<th>‘Fear’</th>
<th>‘Sad’</th>
<th>‘Disgust’</th>
<th>Intent to consume healthy food</th>
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<td>13,44</td>
<td>1,17</td>
<td>1,34</td>
<td>2,00</td>
<td>9,14</td>
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<td>Ad ‘physical threat’ (n=37)</td>
<td>16,16</td>
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<td>1,14</td>
<td>1,46</td>
<td>7,41</td>
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<td>9.14</td>
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**Methodology:**

- **Future research**

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- Fear emotion to kids?
- Intention to diminish unhealthy food consumption
- Other trigger than fear to produce negative affective reactions? (Reactance)

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• Methodology:
  ▪ Limits
    ▪ Behavioral changes
    ▪ Ethical issues

  (Arthur & Quester, 2003; Snipes, LaTour & Bliss, 1999)
Conclusions

Encouraging results for further research

- Persuasive power of negative affective reactions elicited by an ad in terms of behavioral intentions
- Interest in an overcrowded ad environment
- With discernement