Mount Saint Vincent University
Department of Applied Human Nutrition

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Food Marketing to North American Youth through Social

Media

by
Carrie Ann Terrio

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Abstract

Obesity rates among North American youth are a public health concern (Roberts, Shields, de Groh, Aziz & Gilbert, 2012; Ogden, Carroll, Kit, & Flegal, 2012). Previous research findings show strong statistical evidence that televised food advertisements are associated with adiposity among children and youth (ages 2-18 years old) (Institute of Medicine, 2006). In recent years, food and beverage companies have started utilizing newer forms of media including social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to promote products to youth with potential ripple effects on their food-related choices. However, there is currently a lack of research conducted on the topic of food marketing to youth via social media. The aim of this research study was to examine the marketing techniques used by food marketers to market food and beverage products to youth using social media. Another purpose of the study was to determine how youth who are exposed to food marketing on social media respond to these marketing campaigns and how they influence their peers. Data were collected from a sample of food and beverage companies that were part of the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative which were deemed to be most popular based on numbers of likes, tweets and views on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, respectively. Written messages, images and screenshots from videos posted by food companies and consumer posts were collected from food company social media sites. Data analysis resulted in development of a number of themes including: Critical Consumer, Consumer as Co-consumer, Food Brand Promotes Emotions, Food Product Associated with Social Activity, Food Brand Associated with Cool Lifestyle, and Health Appeal. Implications of the findings include development of health promotion programs and social policies that aim to mitigate the negative impact of social media food marketing directed at youth. Although social media has provided a marketing advantage for food marketers, youth

consumers may also benefit from food companies use of social media, since it provides youth

with an opportunity to communicate with food companies and their peers. Social media food

marketing also allows youth to engage in social activist efforts directly on food company social

media pages.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

High obesity rates among youth continue to be a public health concern (Roberts et al., 2012), while food marketing comes under increased scrutiny as a potential contributor to obesity among youth (Harris, Pomeranz, Lobstein, & Brownell, 2009). The emergence of social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube has provided immense marketing opportunities for food and beverage companies. Food and beverage companies have a prominent presence in the digital marketing arena, oftentimes targeting their advertising efforts specifically towards adolescents (ages 12-17 years old), taking advantage of the interactive nature of social media which captures youths' attention (Montgomery & Chester, 2009). Interactive food and beverage marketing to children and youth through social media has been rapidly increasing, while academic researchers in this area have struggled to keep up with the evolving food marketing landscape (Montgomery, Grier, Chester, & Dorfman, 2013). Currently, there is little research that has been conducted on the nature of food and beverage marketing messages presented to youth through social media (Lobstein, 2013). Also of the limited research conducted in the area of food marketing to youth through social media, no studies have involved a qualitative examination of how youth engage or respond to the marketing messages of specific marketing campaigns presented on food and beverage social media websites. Therefore the aim of the proposed study was to examine the social media food marketing landscape (marketing campaigns that promote popular brands from companies that are participants of the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative) which is directed towards youth (aged 13-24 years old) and to determine how youth engage with the social media food marketing content.

1.1 Problem Statement

Obesity rates among North American youth are high. Nearly 20% of Canadian adolescents (12-17 yrs old) were classified as being overweight and approximately 10% of Canadian youth had BMIs in the obese category in 2009 to 2011 (Roberts, Shields, de Groh, Aziz & Gilbert, 2012). American adolescents also have high rates of obesity where between 2009 to 2010, almost 34% met the criteria for overweight and 18.4% were classified as obese (Ogden, Carroll, Kit, & Flegal, 2012). There is strong statistical evidence from a systematic review conducted by the Institute of Medicine (2006) that televised food advertisements are associated with adiposity among children and youth (ages 2-18 years old). This association between obesity and food marketing may be related to the influence that televised food marketing has on eating attitudes and behaviours among youth, which may impact food choices (Story, Neumark-Sztainer, & French, 2002). For example, results from a study conducted with Australian adolescents revealed that increased exposure to televised food advertisements was associated with increased consumption of fast food, sugary drinks and sweet and salty snacks (Scully et al., 2012). However in recent years food companies have been routinely using digital marketing techniques to promote their products to youth using social media websites including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube (Chester & Montgomery, 2007; Collins, Champlin, Pasch, & Williams, 2013). Despite rapid development of social media food marketing, academic research and regulations regarding this specific field has lagged behind (Montgomery et al., 2013).

Although some researchers have started to examine food marketing to youth through social media, most studies in this area have focused on the techniques used by food marketers to promote their brands using social media. Richardson and Harris (2011) examined the marketing of fast food and sugary beverages that was directed at adolescents on social media (Facebook,

YouTube and Twitter). However, their in depth analysis of techniques used by food marketers to promote sugary drinks and fast food brands on social media did not involve an examination of how young consumers respond to these techniques. This is a critical area of knowledge that needs to be added to the field of research regarding food marketing to youth through social media. It is important to gain understanding as to how youth engage with food marketing that is promoted through social media because an examination of content posted by young consumers on these social media sites may provide initial insight into the impact of this new format of food marketing.

Another aspect related to research on food marketing to youth through social media that has not yet been examined is how youth are influencing their peers through the content they post on social media web sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. It has been noted in the research literature that youth are taking on the role of marketer when they share food marketing content throughout their social networks (Montgomery et al., 2013; Harrison & Jackson, 2013). Despite recognition that food marketing through social media is unique in nature compared to traditional forms of food marketing due to the participatory aspect enabled by social media sites, no studies have examined the content posted by youth on these food company social media sites that are in response to marketing campaigns. This is a considerable shortcoming in the research literature, since previous research has indicated that social interactions play an important role in the impact of content that is posted on social media sites such as YouTube (Susarla, Oh, & Tan, 2012).

While social media site usage is quite popular among North American adolescents and young adults, food marketing expenditures for advertising towards youth via new forms of media has been on the incline. From 2006 to 2009 expenditures for food marketing towards youth

through newer media channels in the U. S. increased by $45.8 million USD to a total of $122.5 million USD (Powell, Harris, & Fox, 2013). Given the rates of obesity among North American youth, coupled with their high rates of social media usage, further research regarding social media food marketing to youth is needed, since this escalating form of food marketing could influence the eating attitudes and behaviours of youth.

1.2 Theoretical Importance of the Study

While previous research findings indicate that televised food advertising has a negative impact on youth, information regarding newer channels of delivery for food marketing messages directed at youth is lacking. The present study provided an exploratory examination of food marketing messages distributed to a youth population through social media, which could aid in guiding further research in this field, to determine the impact of social media food marketing on youth's health.

A majority of young consumers who use the internet also widely use social media sites (Statistics Canada, 2011; Madden et al., 2013; Duggan & Brenner, 2013). Food marketers are taking advantage of these new marketing channels to advance their messages related to the marketing of food brands. As social media have become increasingly pervasive in the daily lives of youth, it is important to gain knowledge into the techniques of food advertising to which youth are exposed. Social media also impart a unique aspect to the food marketing landscape in that they are media that allow for consumer interaction, sometimes resulting in customers themselves becoming marketers of their favorite brands (Montgomery, Grier, Chester, & Dorfman, 2011).

Social Cognitive Theory involves triadic reciprocal causation in which a bi-directional relationship exists between personal determinants, behavioural determinants and environmental

determinants, in describing the health related behaviours of individuals (Bandura, 2001). In the context of this study the social environment such as social media websites that contain food marketing messages influence youth and allow them to acquire knowledge about new food products. The youth who process these messages may start consuming the food product (adopting the innovative behaviours in practice) and may share links to food marketing messages on their social media profiles that then expose everyone in their online social network to the food marketing messages. Therefore initially a food company may captivate an individual with their marketing messages but then that message may become diffused throughout that individual's online social network, as they process the messages and then carry them forth. This effect of diffusing food marketing messages through social networks by the consumers themselves may be even more pronounced or at least visible through social media. Cultivation Theory and Media Dependency Theory also provide a theoretical explanation of how social media food marketing may influence youth. Cultivation Theory, similar to Social Cognitive Theory involves a bi-directional relationship between media and consumers and exposure to media messages (such as food marketing on social media) can cultivate beliefs about the world (or food and health) (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli 1986). Media Dependency Theory also describes a tripartite relationship between audience, media and society, in which consumers may be influenced by social media food marketing and society, but may also influence change among these two entities (Ball-Rokeach, & DeFleur, 1976). Theories including Critical Social Theory and the Social Ecological Theory involve a more sociological approach to explaining the influence of food marketing through social media among youth. These theories refer to the impact of the social environment on influencing youths' health, as well as issues of the power of

food companies in creating a social environment which could negatively affect the health of North American youth (Berk, 2009; Ozanne & Murray, 1995).

      This study has contributed to filling a gap in the research literature regarding the nature of food marketing to youth through social media, which has been sparse up to this point. The interactive nature of social media has allowed for gathering of information and subsequent analysis of how youth process and interact with food marketing initiatives via social media, which is also an area of limited research. The findings of the study also have provided insight into the marketing messages presented by food marketers to youth in an attempt to influence their food choices.

1.3 Research Questions

1) How does the current food and beverage marketing landscape focus on North American youth in social media?

    a) What messages are presented to youth in marketing campaigns for food or beverage brands through Facebook, Twitter and YouTube

2) How are youth engaging with food marketing on social media?

    a) How are youth responding to food and beverage marketing campaigns on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube?

    b) How are youth engaging with food and beverage marketing campaigns on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube through the creation of user-generated content?

3) How are youth influencing peers when interacting with food marketing through social media?

a) How are youth influencing peers through their comments posted on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in response to food marketing campaigns promoted through these social media websites?

b) How are youth influencing peers through the development and posting of user-generated content on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, which are developed in response to food marketing campaigns?

1.4 Definition of Key Terms

Advergames - video games that are created by advertisers for the specific purpose of promoting one or more brands and involve colorful, fun and fast-paced adventures (Moore, 2006).

Attitude - a learned, global evaluation of an object (person, place, or issue) that influences thought and action (Perloff, 2010).

Food - any article manufactured, sold or represented for use as food or drink for human beings, chewing gum, and any ingredient that may be mixed with food for any purpose whatever (Food and Drugs Act, 2015).

Persuasion - a symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behaviours regarding an issue through the transmission of a message in an atmosphere of free choice (Perloff, 2010).

Social Influence - is the broad process in which the behaviour of one person alters the thoughts or actions of another (Perloff, 2010).

Social Marketing - use of marketing techniques from the commercial business sector such as market research, product positioning and conception, pricing, physical distribution, advertising

and promotion, which are applied to advance social causes (Chapman Walsh, Rudd, Moeykens, & Moloney, 1993).

Social Media - a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social Network - a network of social interactions and personal relationships, which the development of is facilitated through social media sites (Adapted from Oxford Dictionaries, 2013).

User Generated Content - creative content created outside of a professional context that is published on a publically accessible website or on a social networking website (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Viral marketing - the process of encouraging consumers to pass along electronic marketing messages to other people, which can result in an exponential spread of marketing messages throughout social networks (Dobele, Toleman, & Beverland, 2005).

Youth - for this study youth is defined as an individual who is 13 years of age up to 24 years of age, which covers adolescence to young adulthood.

Web 2.0 - popular Internet platforms that focus on data sharing, communication, community and co-production (Fuchs, 2011).

Chapter 2: Review and Critique of the Research Literature

2.1 Introduction

Based on results from the Canadian Health Measures Survey conducted from 2009 to 2011 it was determined that 19.9% of 12-17 year olds in Canada were classified as overweight, while 10.2% were classified as obese (Roberts et al., 2012). In the 2004 Canadian Community Health Survey it was reported that 24.8% of 18-24 year old Canadians were overweight and 11.4% were classified as obese (Tjepkema, n.d.). A U. S. study in which data were collected in 2009 to 2010 found that 33.6% of adolescents (12- 19 years old) were overweight and 18.4% were obese (Ogden et al., 2012). These high rates of obesity among North American youth are of concern because previous study findings have indicated that a status of overweight in adolescence indicates high risk for obesity in adulthood (Yan Wang, Chyen, Lee, & Lowry, 2008).

Aspects of the social environment to which North American youth are exposed to, such as food advertising can have an impact on eating behaviours, which may have an effect on their weight status (Story, Neumark-Sztainer, & French, 2002). Food marketing to youth is both pervasive and powerful (Schwartz & Ustjanauskas, 2012). Equally as pervasive is the manner in which social media has infiltrated the lives of millions of youth globally. Among Canadian adolescents (12-17 years old) Internet is a universal phenomena, with 96% being Internet users (Zamaria & Fletcher, 2008). Youth and young adults (ages 12-29 years) in Canada are the heaviest users of Internet amongst all Canadians (Zamaria & Fletcher, 2008). Similarly, American adolescents are also high users with 95% accessing the Internet (Madden, Lenhart, Duggan, Cortesi & Gasser, 2013). The majority of North American youth who use the Internet also use social media sites (Duggan & Brenner, 2013; Madden et al., 2013; Statistics Canada, 2011). Geared with awareness of how the Internet and social media have a prominent role in the

lives of youth, food and beverage companies have increasingly utilized digital marketing techniques, including promotion of brands through social media websites (Chester, Cheyne, & Dorfman, 2011).

2.2 Developmental Stages of Youth Associated with Marketing

Two prominent theories in the field of child development are Erikson's Psychosocial Theory and Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development. According to Erikson's Psychosocial Theory individuals acquire attitudes and skills at each of the psychosocial stages that assist the individual in becoming an active, contributing member of society (Berk, 2009). The psychosocial stage that applies to adolescence is called the "Identity versus Identity Confusion" stage which involves adolescents attempting to form their personal and social identities (Berk, 2009). The psychosocial stage that applies to young adulthood is called the "Intimacy versus Isolation" stage which involves young adults developing intimate relationships with others (Berk, 2009). Piaget's Cognitive-Development Theory is based on the concept that individuals actively construct knowledge as they manipulate and explore their world and it consists of four main stages (Berk, 2009). The fourth stage of Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development is the "Formal Operational" stage which is from 11 years up to adulthood and marks the stage at which abstract, systematic thinking is possible (Berk, 2009).

Much of the recent research in the area of food marketing to youth through emerging forms of media such as the Internet has primarily focused on examining food marketing that is intended for children (Brady, Mendelson, Farrell, & Wong, 2010; Moore & Rideout, 2007; Cheyne, Dorfman, Bukofzer, & Harris, 2013; Alvy & Calvert, 2008; Lee, Choi, Taylor Quilliam, & Cole, 2009). A potential contributor to this research trend may be study findings that have indicated that children develop the ability to understand persuasive intent by age 12, making

them more vulnerable to effects from advertising prior to that age (Carter, Patterson, Donovan, Ewing, & Roberts, 2011; World Federation of Advertisers, 2007). Likely because of the large body of research findings related to food marketing to children and the consensus that marketing to children less than 12 years of age is unethical, the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) was formed in 2006. The CFBAI involves 17 major food companies from the U.S. and 19 food companies from Canada that pledged either not to market their products to children under 12 years of age or only to market healthier food products to consumers of this age group (Council of Better Business Bureau, 2013; Advertising Standards Canada, 2010).

Despite 12 years of age being considered a benchmark age at which children become more protected by their cognitive development in resisting negative effects of food marketing, some researchers have expressed concern that adolescents may also be at risk of negative effects from exposure to food marketing (Williams, 2013; Powell, Harris, & Fox, 2013). These negative effects may be related to adolescents' need for peer approval and social identity which may result in peer influence and group conformity becoming determinants in eating behaviour (Story et al., 2002). New forms of food marketing that utilize digital media, including social media, may be particularly appealing to adolescents because of the opportunities it provides for social interaction and identity formation (Montgomery, & Chester, 2009). Findings from a Canadian study revealed that 91% of Internet users ages 16-24 years old used social networking sites (Statistics Canada, 2011). In a U. S. study, 81% of adolescent (12-17 years of age) Internet users sampled used a social media site in 2012 (Madden et al., 2013). In another study 83% of young American adult Internet users sampled had visited social networking sites (Duggan & Brenner, 2013).

2.3 Persuasion Techniques Used in Marketing

Methods of persuasion have become increasingly complex with the advent of new technology that blurs the lines between information, entertainment and influence (Perloff, 2010). Even though consumers may understand that food advertisements have persuasive intent, they may not realize that their consumption decisions are being influenced by exposure to food product promotion messages (Chandon & Wansink, 2012). Leading food and beverage companies are utilizing neuromarketing methods to develop marketing campaigns that are designed to influence emotional and subconscious brain processing among youth (Chester, Cheyne, Dorfman, 2011). Neuromarketing involves applying research findings to marketing campaigns based on studies that involved examining participants' brains through functional magnetic resonance imaging to determine consumers' reactions to marketing (Chester et al., 2011). Messages that food advertisers convey through food marketing campaigns are that eating the promoted food products is normal, fun and socially rewarding (Chandon & Wansink, 2012).

2.3.1 Dual-process models of persuasion.

These models of persuasion involve explicit and implicit persuasion (Montgomery et al., 2013). Many elements of digital marketing are based on implicit persuasion, in which emotional responses are prompted from consumers, while conscious processing of product attributes is avoided (Montgomery et al., 2013). An American study involving the exposure of university students to advertisements on the Internet under varied attention conditions (direct or indirect) revealed that consumers had a favorable attitude towards the brand, regardless of the level of attention that they paid to the advertisements (Yoo, 2008). Study findings also indicated that participants who unconsciously processed web ads, did not recall seeing the brand but were more

likely to select the brand in a brand choice task than consumers who were not exposed to the web advertisement for the brand.

McDonald's™ restaurant utilizes association in its advertising, reminiscent of unconscious processing, which involves the portrayal of messages that associate positive emotional feelings with McDonald's™ restaurant (Perloff, 2010). This technique involves advertisements that promote good feelings by showing pleasant images such as a boys' sports team eating at McDonald's™ after their practice, rather than directly promoting the specific attributes of the food products offered at the restaurant (Perloff, 2010). The attitudes that advertisers intend for consumers to develop towards products contribute to the development of social identity, by associating the use of products with higher social status and happiness (Perloff, 2010).

2.3.2 Social norms.

Burchell, Rettie and Patel (2013) suggest that a social norm approach may be an effective tool for social marketing, which is based on the theoretical concept of conformity, in which people's behaviour is shaped by their perception of other people's behaviour. Therefore a social norm approach involves shaping people's behaviours by conveying messages about the behaviour and attitudes of the majority of other people (Burchell et al., 2013). Food marketers use the social norm approach in their commercial marketing of food and beverage brands. Based on Social Learning Theory, frequent exposure to food marketing messages on social media sites may teach consumers social behaviours and attitudes related to eating (Black & Bryant, 1992).

Food marketers have positioned low nutrient dense foods and beverages in such a manner that they are considered to be a legitimate part of popular culture within society (Harrison, & Jackson, 2013). Repeated exposure to food marketing designed to be processed at a subconscious

level, has the potential to influence what types of foods and eating behaviours are perceived as

normal (Montgomery et al., 2013). Also the manner in which frequent exposure to food

marketing is integrated into social interaction, may work to intensify perceptions of social norms

surrounding foods and beverages (Montgomery et al., 2013).

Individuals engage in conformity based on social norms as a way to gain social approval

among peers (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Social media food marketing creates a social

environment that may encourage conformity among young consumers in terms of eating attitudes

and behaviours. For instance social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter

allow consumers to make comments on food company social media websites and in some cases

to endorse brands such as on Facebook in which users can "like" a brand. When a young

consumer either endorses, comments on a food brand or creates content promoting the brand on a

social media website, the social network aspect of these platforms means that all those in the

consumer's social network will be exposed to the messages produced by the consumer.

Therefore some youth may feel that they should conform to the eating attitudes and behaviours

of those in their social network, by "liking" a food or beverage brand on Facebook because many

of their friends have done so or by drinking a certain beverage because a popular peer talked

about doing so on Twitter. Food marketers exert cultural influence over consumers by conveying

symbolic meaning of food and distributing messages regarding cultural norms pertaining to food,

widely throughout society (Harrison, & Jackson, 2013). Cultivation Theory posits that media

messages can have an impact on culture over the long term (Potter, 2014). Therefore some of the

impacts of social media food marketing on youth may develop slowly and be insidious in nature.

2.4 Food Marketing to Children and Youth via the Internet

Food marketers utilize the Internet as a way to engage children and youth consumers in more sophisticated advertisements for a longer period of time than traditional advertisement vehicles such as television (Cheyne et al., 2013). Much of the research regarding food marketing to youth on the Internet has focused on websites intended for children (up to 12 years of age) (Cheyne et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2009; Brady et al., 2010; Moore & Rideout, 2007; Alvy & Calvert, 2008). Just a few studies have examined the area of Internet food marketing that is directed towards adolescents. Weber, Story and Harnack (2006) conducted a content analysis of food and beverage brand websites that were aimed at children and adolescents. The findings of their study revealed that food and beverage company websites contained interactive components including sound, animation and movement. The company websites also contained advergames (63%), incentives such as contests and sweepstakes (73%), promotional characters such as sports figures (70%) or celebrities (58%) and most had tie-ins (90%) to television shows or movies. Another American study involved examining the level of exposure of children and adolescents to food and beverage company websites (Harris, Speers, Schwartz, & Brownell, 2012). Findings from this study revealed that on average 0.9 million adolescents visited food company websites that contained advergames, each month in 2009. The most common food category promoted on food company websites that contained advergames was candy, followed by cereal and fast food.

A significant limitation of the research literature on the area of food marketing to youth on the Internet is that most studies have examined the content or exposure to food or beverage websites specifically. However food and beverage companies are becoming prominent forces on social media websites often maintaining official social media websites. These social media websites maintained by food and beverage companies offer unique marketing tools compared to

regular websites because they allow consumers to respond to advertising content and share their messages with friends, and in some cases engage in marketing the food or beverage brands through content they create themselves. Research concerning social media food marketing to youth had been quite limited and is needed to increase the understanding of the content on these food company produced social media websites and to learn how young consumers respond to this newer marketing content.

2.5 Social Media in General

Internet-based social media has enhanced the rapid spread of communication between people, but more specifically has allowed companies to talk with their customers and for customers to talk to one another (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social media provides the potential for global reach and is an extension of word-of-mouth communication, in the sense that consumers can tell thousands of people at a time about their experience with a particular product (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). The mass communication process involves a multistep flow of communication between the message producer, opinion leaders and the audience, which are complex, multidirectional, and multidimensional (Black & Bryant, 1992). While marketing managers cannot directly control consumer conversations regarding product brands on social media, they can use techniques to influence consumers' conversations, presumably so that those conversations portray advertised products in a favourable light (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Forbes and Vespoli (2013) interviewed participants (median age of 28 years old) to determine their experiences of purchasing products based on a recommendation they viewed or received via social media. Results of the study indicated that younger consumers (less than 22 years old) used Twitter most frequently (52%) as a tool for product recommendation. Findings also indicated that participants desired current information about products immediately and that information

about a product posted on a social media site one or two days ago was considered to be too old. The researchers suggested that their study findings may indicate a shift in the use of social media among young consumers resulting in a switch from primarily using Facebook as a source for product information to quicker forms of social media such as Twitter.

2.5.1 Facebook.

The marketing potential of Facebook is unprecedented based on it being the most visited website in the world, with a membership of over half a billion (Williams, 2013). Many companies are using Facebook as a marketing tool by creating Facebook groups, pages and applications that allow companies to engage with customers and potential customers and to find out more about them (Poynter, 2010). Xie and Kukla (2013) conducted a study in which they examined the motivational reasons American university students pass along content on Facebook in reference to three social-psychological theories including Social Exchange Theory, Social Cognitive Theory and the Strength of Ties Theory. Findings of the study revealed that participants were motivated to pass along content via Facebook in a viral manner based on Social Exchange Theory and based on their Strength of Ties. The participants shared information that they found to be interesting regardless of whether they thought it would be useful to others, which is in opposition to the Social Cognitive Theory. However, congruent with Social Exchange Theory, participants gained greater feelings of welfare by exchanging ideas with others and consistent with the Strength of Ties Theory, participants who had strong ties with Facebook friends were more likely to share content with those friends. While Facebook membership is officially restricted to those 13 years and older, there have been some concerns that younger children are joining by entering an older birth date (Williams, 2013). However, it is

not known how much under-age children are exposed to marketing messages intended for older

children and adults, nor how these messages will impact them (Lobstein, 2013).

2.5.2 Twitter.

Twitter is a microblogging website launched in July 2006, which allows members to post

short updates of what they are doing within a 140 character limit (Poynter, 2010). The posts are

called 'Tweets' and are visible to anyone who has chosen to follow the posting members

(Poynter, 2010). Twitter has increased in popularity since its initial launch with millions of

people tweeting every day (Poynter, 2010). Currently, there are 200 million active users on

Twitter and an average of 400 million Tweets are created everyday (Twitter, Inc., 2013a). The

Twitter database is open to public viewing and can be searched using options such as

Search.Twitter, TwitScoop and TweetDeck (Poynter, 2010). It is not necessary to become a

member of Twitter to search tweets and members, however only members can post tweets.

Companies monitor tweets as a way to monitor instances in which their brand is mentioned, also

in some cases to gain knowledge of their customers' lives (Poynter, 2010). Other terms specific

to Twitter include 'Retweeting' and 'Hashtags' (Poynter, 2010). A Twitter user will Retweet a

post when they post a message that they come across that they want to pass along to all those

who follow them on Twitter. In some instances this can lead to messages "going viral" which

involves marketing messages being shared exponentially throughout social networks (Poynter,

2010). The use of hashtags (i.e., #Doritos) is a method to organize tweets regarding the same

topic into groups. All hashtags begin with the hash character, '#' followed by a word or phrase

and no space, e.g., #BigMac (Poynter, 2010). The hashtag also is positioned as a tool for social

interaction by Twitter, in which it is likened to a campfire- "Hashtags are like campfires: people

gather around them to have conversations." (Twitter, Inc., 2013d). Twitter is also a tool for

advertisers that allows them to post regular personal tweets to wide audiences who may have a focused interest in their promoted brands (Kietzmann et al., 2012).

2.5.3 YouTube.

YouTube, a website that allows the general public and advertisers to upload and share originally created videos, was founded in February 2005 (YouTube, n.d.). YouTube is quite popular worldwide, with 800 million unique users that visit the website each month (YouTube, 2012). Links to the videos on YouTube can be distributed by e-mail and shared on other social network sites such as Facebook, sometimes resulting in videos garnering large numbers of viewers and a rapid growth in popularity (Freeman & Chapman, 2007). Four billion videos are streamed on YouTube each day (YouTube, 2012).

Findings from a study by Haridakis and Hanson (2009) involving a survey with university students revealed that motives for viewing YouTube videos were similar to those specified for television viewing in previous studies. However the interest in using YouTube was also due to social components including social interactions and co-viewing. YouTube is also different from television viewing because users can post comments in response to viewing videos on the website. Thewall, Sud and Vis (2012) examined characteristics of comments and the authors who comment on videos posted on YouTube. Findings from their study revealed that the most common age of YouTube commenters was 20 and that 35.6% of those sampled were from the United States, with 4.9% being from Canada. Study findings also indicated that the average length of comments on YouTube was 95.5 characters in length and 23% of comments examined were in response to previous comments. Therefore, Thewall et al. suggest that the findings confirm that YouTube is a website that hosts genuine online discussions among the YouTube audience.

2.6 Social Media Food Marketing to Youth

Thus far the primary focus of policies regarding food marketing to children and youth has been on televised food advertising, however, in recent years marketers have been using integrated marketing strategies that involve a mixture of television, social network, mobile phone applications and more (Lobstein, 2013). At this point in time there is scarce availability of published evidence on the exposure and impact of food marketing through these newer media which involve an integrated approach (Lobstein, 2013). Of the limited research, one study conducted with Australian students (ages 12-17 yrs old, n=12,188) indicated that increased exposure to digital food marketing was associated with increased consumption of energy-dense and nutrient poor foods, such as fast food, sugary drinks and salty snacks (Scully et al., 2012). In this study exposure to digital food marketing was assessed based on an affirmative answer to whether they had received an e-mail or a text message with a special offer, competition or giveaway related to a food or drink product during the last month. The design of this quantitative study only allowed for an estimate of Australian adolescents' exposure to digital food marketing but did not allow for an examination of specific marketing techniques the adolescents were exposed to or how they engaged with them (besides the effect it had on their eating behaviours). Despite the limitations of the study by Scully et al. (2012), it did fill a gap in the research literature regarding the effects of adolescents' exposure to food marketing, which has been previously lacking due to most other studies in this area examining the effects of food marketing exposure among younger children.

Social media marketing is particularly effective at allowing brands to be strategically incorporated into the daily lives of adolescents and their social relationships, with the strong influence of peer pressure assisting in the promotion of particular food and beverage brands

(Montgomery & Chester, 2009). Richardson and Harris (2011) examined marketing of fast food and sugary beverages directed to youth through social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube). Their study findings revealed that posts on food company social media sites consisted of featured promotions, sponsorships, cause-related marketing, coupons and discounts, events and crowd sourcing (i.e., asking the public to assist in naming a food product). Also engagement techniques used by food marketers on their social media sites were identified and consisted of tabs, photos, videos, polls and downloadable content on Facebook and contests and customer service interactions on Twitter. Engagement is a primary aim in marketing campaigns involving digital marketing (Montgomery et al., 2013). Digital marketing differs from traditional forms of media such as television in the sense that it allows for consumer engagement and encourages consumers to interact with brands and to integrate them into their social relationships (Montgomery et al., 2013).

2.6.1 Personalization.

Marketers who utilize digital marketing techniques engage in data collection from consumers to allow them to personalize their marketing approach to specific groups of participants based on their characteristics such as preferences, behaviours and psychological profiles (Montgomery et al., 2013). The concept of personalization also is referred to as behavioural targeting. Behavioural targeting involves using information about website visitors in order to personalize the marketing directed at them on the website they are visiting (Poynter, 2010). Social media websites provide an ideal mechanism for behavioural targeting marketing because they involve users disclosing their personal information in order to register as a member on the site (Williams, 2013). Social media users' profile information is subsequently used by advertisers to promote their products to those specific customers that would likely have an

interest in their products (Williams, 2013). For example, Facebook users have profiles which list

personal information and also interests and activities, which can be used by advertisers to more

precisely target their advertising efforts (Williams, 2013).

Twitter offers services to marketers in which they can target their advertising to specific

Twitter users through keywords including timeline, interest, geography, gender and similarities

to existing followers (Twitter, Inc., 2013b). Twitter's Privacy Policy indicates that when a user

uses any of the services offered by Twitter they are consenting to the collection, transfer,

manipulation, storage, disclosure and other uses of the information they provide (Twitter,

2013c).

Likewise YouTube offers 'targeting' services to advertisers that allow them to market to

specific groups of YouTube users based on characteristics such as demographics, geography,

language and interests (YouTube, 2012). Facebook utilizes cookies in advertising to consumers.

Cookies are small files placed on the user's Internet browser by an advertisement or website that

the user has viewed (Facebook, 2013). These cookies are used to target advertising to the viewer

on Facebook and other websites that may be of interest to them based on their profile content.

Food and beverage marketers routinely apply behavioural targeting techniques in their digital

marketing campaigns (Montgomery et al., 2013).

2.6.2 User-generated content.

The concept of user-generated content involves marketers encouraging consumers to

assist in creating marketing messages (Montgomery et al., 2013). The consumers become active

participants in the marketing process and create and distribute brand-related content. The concept

of user-generated content is also referred to as co-creation (Poynter, 2010). Co-creation is a

marketing technique used by companies to both engage consumers and to get them to generate

new product ideas (Poynter, 2010). It is typically presented to consumers in the form of a

competition. Marketers present co-creation as an opportunity for consumers to feel in charge, but

it also involves consumers performing creative work for companies for free (Harrison & Jackson,

2013). A content analysis conducted by Canadian researchers, Smith, Fischer and Yongjian

(2012) involving a comparison of brand-related user generated content across YouTube,

Facebook, and Twitter, revealed that brands that actively manage their social media websites are

more likely to have positive communications with consumers.

The marketing of less healthy food products towards children and youth through the

marketing strategy of co-creation raises two main ethical concerns (Harrison & Jackson, 2013).

First, companies using co-creation as a marketing technique are receiving free labour from

children and adolescents when they submit their creative work as part of promotional

competitions. Secondly, it has been suggested that it is unethical for companies to engage

children and adolescents in co-creation activities for food products that could have implications

for childhood obesity.

The Frito-Lay™ snack food company has implemented a user-generated content

marketing strategy for promotion of its Doritos™ brand. The marketing campaign is called

"Crash the Super Bowl" and involves consumers being invited to create 30 second commercials

for which the top two winners would have their advertisements aired on TV during the Super

Bowl (Heine, 2013). The Seventh Annual Crash the Super Bowl marketing campaign was

implemented on Facebook as a switch from previous years in which the campaign was launched

on the brand's micro-website, which proved to be a successful strategy with 3500 videos

submitted by consumers and nearly 100 million views of the brand's Facebook page (Heine,

2013). Although marketing campaigns such as "Crash the Super Bowl" brought great success to

the Frito-Lay company, it was not met without opposition. In 2011 the Center for Digital

Democracy, Consumer Action, Consumer Watchdog and the Praxis Project jointly submitted a

formal complaint and request for investigation to the Federal Trade Commission regarding

PepsiCo™ and Frito-lay's™ deceptive marketing practices of promoting Doritos™ to

adolescents (Center for Digital Democracy, 2011). However, as of July 2015, there was no

evidence of any reports on the FTC website regarding an investigation of the Doritos™ brand.

2.7 Use of Social Media for Health Promotion/Advocacy

Williams (2013) suggests that social media should be better utilized as a tool for

promoting healthy dietary habits among young people. Neiger et al. (2012) suggest five broad

purposes for use of social media in health promotion including: communication with consumers

for market insight, establish and promote a brand with consumers, disseminate critical

information, expand reach to include broader, more diverse audiences and to foster public

engagement and partnerships with consumers. Social media have been used by the public as

social support for illnesses and for political actions related to food companies (Kang, 2012;

Sugawara, Narimatsu, Hozawa, Otani, & Fukao, 2012). Social media have also been used by

non-profit organizations as an advocacy tool for activities such as distributing counter-

advertising messages (Burton, Dadich & Soboleva, 2013; Dietz, 2013; Guo & Saxton, n.d.).

However despite rapid adoption of social media marketing in commercial industries these media

remain underutilized by public health professionals, yet social media marketing has low cost but

wide reach and has great potential for use among the young demographic in which they are

popular (Vance, Howe, & Dellavalle, 2009).

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1 Critical Social Theory

Critical Social Theory involves exposing and analyzing the sociocultural and political-economic conditions of society that can influence human activity, with the intended purpose of the analysis to evoke social change (Wells, 1999). Contemporary social theorist Habermas, has enhanced the concept of critical social theory by extending its applicability to modern society (Ozanne & Murray, 1995). Habermas developed the Theory of Communicative Competence which involves core expectations for reciprocal communication (Ozanne & Murray, 1995). Habermas posited that competent communication involves a) others speaking so we can understand them (i.e., the norm of comprehensibility), b) others communicating their true intentions (i.e., the norm of sincerity), c) others communicating based on a shared normative context (i.e., the norm of legitimacy), d) others speaking the truth (i.e., the norm of truthfulness) (Ozanne & Murray, 1995). Communication that does not follow these four criteria for competent communication is deemed to be distorted communication which can potentially reinforce social systems such as the market place which may perpetuate power differences between consumers and marketers (Ozanne & Murray, 1995). Some aspects of food marketing to youth through social media may be considered forms of distorted communication. In particular, food marketing to youth via social media does not follow the norm of sincerity that is expected in competent communication. Marketing campaigns by major food companies such as PepsiCo™ communicate that their intention is to entertain youth which is not consistent with their true intent which is to sell their food products (Center for Digital Democracy, 2011). Another aspect of social media food marketing that involves distorted communication is when marketers depict

their advertised food or beverage products in a false manner which violates the norm of truthfulness. In May 2012 The Public Health Advocacy Institute filed a request to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to undertake an investigation of a specific marketing campaign produced by PepsiCo™ to promote the Gatorade™ brand to adolescents (Public Health Advocacy Institute, 2012). Advertisements that were part of the campaign gave the false impression that Gatorade™ could enhance the performance of sports players who had the flu. This impression was based on the erroneous depiction of a star basketball player being shown drinking Gatorade™ while playing a basketball game during which he had influenza. These false assertions and depictions of historical basketball footage created by PepsiCo™ to promote the Gatorade™ brand to teens is an example of distorted communication since it does not involve communicating information that is truthful. Despite advocacy efforts by the Public Health Advocacy Institute in 2012, regarding the deceptive marketing practices of the Gatorade™ brand, as of July 2015 there were no reports present on the FTC website that indicate that the FTC investigated the marketing campaign implemented by PepsiCo™. Habermas also describes an "ideal speech situation" which involves all people having an equal opportunity to engage in discourse, in a manner unconstrained from authority, tradition or dogma (Ozanne, & Murray, 1995). An Ideal Speech Situation involves the absence of barriers which would obstruct a communication exchange between participants of a discourse (Thompson, 1981). In some ways marketing of food using social media sites could allow for an Ideal Speech Situation in the manner that users of social media sites (marketers, consumers and health practitioners) have an equal opportunity to engage in discourse on food marketing using social media. Thompson (1981) describes an equal opportunity in the context of the Ideal Speech Situation as all potential participants in a discourse as having the same chance to initiate and sustain dialogue through

questions and answers, claims and counter claims. Since anyone over the age of 13 can sign up

for a social media account, they in theory have the potential to engage in an Ideal Speech

Situation.

Critical theory is an appropriate theoretical framework from which to base the proposed

study, since some suggest that all marketing activities involve an inherent underlying power

disparity between individuals and industry (Harrison & Jackson, 2013). The large number of

channels through which food marketing messages are transferred, results in a near constant

exposure to messages promoting less healthy foods, as well as reflects and reinforces the sheer

power and cultural influence the food industry possesses (Harrison & Jackson, 2013). The

equivalency of power between food industries and consumers is questioned on an ethical basis

on the grounds of an imbalance of resources. Food marketers have significant financial benefit in

terms of being able to develop and manage their marketing messages, while consumers have

limited resources at their disposal to oppose such messages (Harrison & Jackson, 2013).

Marketers also have varying political agendas, which in some instances translates into control

over policies related to marketing foods to youth. The food and beverage industry has a past

history of using its power of influence to pressure the Federal Trade Commission into giving up

control of regulating the marketing of food to children and youth to the food and beverage

industries, allowing for self-regulation (Dietz, 2013).

3.2 Cultivation Theory

Cultivation Theory, developed by George Gerbner, involves the premise that media such

as television can cultivate common beliefs about the world and influence long term acculturation

(Potter, 2014). Gerbner et al., (1986) describe television as a ubiquitous presence in people's

daily lives, which through continued exposure to its messages is likely to reiterate, confirm and

cultivate people's values and perspectives, playing a major role in socialization. Gerbner and colleagues (1986) suggest that the cultivation process, described by the Cultivation Theory involves interaction between a medium and the people exposed to that medium, rather than a one-way communication process. Although Cultivation Theory was developed prior to the emergence of social media, the principles of the theory still offer application to the proposed study. For example youth are highly exposed to the Internet and social media and through repeated exposure to messages from social media related to food and beverage marketing, may cultivate values and beliefs regarding eating attitudes and behaviours. Also social media, perhaps even more so than television involve a two-way interaction of media messages and consumers of those messages or at least with social media people's responses to media messages are more explicit or visible.

3.3 Media Dependency Theory

The Media Dependency Theory which was presented by Ball-Rokeach and Defleur in 1976 involves the recognition that there is a tripartite relationship between audience, media and society, which is influenced by the nature of audience dependency on media information. The effects of media messages depend on the relative degree of audience dependency on media information resources (Ball-Rokeach, & DeFleur, 1976). For example, media messages may influence audience behaviour if audiences lack clarity in terms of their social realities and depend on media for information that will make their social realities more understandable (Ball-Rokeach, & DeFleur, 1976). In the context of the present study, the audience or youth depend on social media for entertainment. However the norms of society regarding Internet and social media use influence the extent to which youth engage with these forms of media and influence food marketers' decisions to utilize social media for marketing of their brands. Youth to some

extent exert an influence on society in terms of contributing to social norms related to conduct on

social media websites, particularly because of their early adopter role (Madden et al., 2013).

Youth also influence social media food marketing messages because they have an opportunity to

make comments on these websites that are viewable by the public and they can create marketing

messages themselves through the development of content associated with food company contests

such as videos that are essentially commercials.

Chapter 4: Methods for Data Collection

4.1 Introduction

Montgomery et al. (2013) suggested that in order for researchers to gain an understanding

of the complex ways in which children and youth are interacting with digital food marketing, it

would be necessary to develop flexible and innovative methodological approaches. An

innovative approach to data collection for the present study was especially necessary considering

that research related to the nature of social media food marketing that is intended for youth is in

the infancy stage. The main goal in data collection was to capture the essence of the social media

food marketing landscape that is directed to youth through specific selected marketing

campaigns and to examine how youth engaged with this content. An effort was made to collect

data from the social media marketing campaigns from food and beverage brands that had high

popularity. The basis for this procedure was the premise that higher popularity of marketing

campaigns may indicate higher exposure and impact among youth consumers. Aspects of the

marketing campaigns that food companies have created to appeal to youth were examined on

three social media websites: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Specific data collection techniques

that were implemented in the study will be described in detail in the next sections.

4.2 Sampling Technique

As a starting point, food companies that were participants of the Children's Food and

Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) of Canada and the U. S. (See Appendix A for list of

food company participants from each country) were considered for inclusion in the sample.

Membership with the CFBAI involved making commitments to market healthy foods to children

under 12 years of age or to not market to children under 12 years at all (Advertising Standards

Canada, 2010). While participating food companies in the CFBAI have not made any pledges

regarding marketing their products to individuals over age 12, it may be plausible that these

companies would show greater social responsibility in the manner that they market to older

youth given their willingness to market more ethically to younger youth. Therefore it may be

possible that the marketing techniques of participants of the CFBAI that are directed at older

youth on social media sites may be among the least unethical of the social media food marketing

landscape.

Except for fast food companies, each participating food company of the CFBAI sells

various food or beverage brands under the larger company name. Therefore to determine the

most popular brands on social media sites it was necessary to develop a deductive process to

acquire a specific sample of the most popular food and beverage brands that are marketed to

youth on social media sites. Each CFBAI participant food company name was typed into Google

and the main official website was recorded. Each main website was visited and examined for

links to microsites for specific brands or marketing campaigns. The URLs for social media sites

of interest (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) that were linked to main food company websites or

microsites were recorded. Many food companies had specific social media sites for particular

brands, resulting in an extensive list of social media web sites originating from CFBAI food

company participants from Canada and the U. S. The social media websites for each brand were

visited and the number of likes from Facebook, views on YouTube and number of followers on

Twitter were recorded, along with the date of access. This information was recorded from

August 5, 2013 to August 12, 2013.

To determine which brands were most popular and would be included in the sample for

the study, I first selected the brand with the highest number of either likes, followers or views for

each social media website for each company for both the Canadian and U.S. CFBAI participants.

Then for each selected list the brands were further refined to include brands that were promoted on all three social media websites and that contained over 10 million likes, followers or views for any one social media site.

Two additional brands which were non-CFBAI participants were included in the study sample to act as potential comparators to brands from CFBAI participant food companies. These two additional food/beverage brands were selected based on findings from Richardson and Harris (2011). Richardson and Harris had recorded numbers of likes, followers and views from social media web sites for brands of sugary beverages and fast food companies. From the list of brands developed by Richardson and Harris I selected the top three sugary beverage brands and top three fast food company brands that were not from CFBAI participating companies. The official social media sites for these six brands were examined and the number of likes, followers and views, as of August 12, 2013 were recorded. Based on the updated review of the top sugary beverage and top fast food brands, of the brands identified by Richardson and Harris, Starbucks™ was selected as the fast food brand for inclusion in the sample for the current study based on the highest number of likes on Facebook (35 176 743). Red Bull™ was selected as the top sugary beverage brand to be included in the sample for the current study based on having the highest number of views on YouTube (615 663 817).

4.2.1. Sample.

The following was the tentative sample list initially proposed in my thesis proposal:

Coca Cola™

Pepsi™

McDonalds™

Nestle Perrier™

Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™

Skittles™

Betty Crocker™

Pringles™

Kraft Foods™

Oreo™

Starbucks™

Red Bull™

This list was considered to be a tentative list of the sample for data collection and provided a starting point from which to gather potential data, based on the high popularity of those brands. The listed sample above was also tentative in nature in respect that it needed to be perceived as fluid so as to allow for flexibility in data collection and analysis. For example as data collection criteria morphed over time to assist in achieving theoretical saturation, so too did the final food brand list. Each food brand from the tentative sample list was examined to see if an identifiable marketing campaign was present which was advertised on the three social media sites of interest (Facebook, YouTube and Twitter). In the early stages of data collection a food brand was included for data collection only if it offered a specific marketing campaign that appeared to be targeted towards youth, which was present on all three of the food brands' official Facebook, Twitter and YouTube sites. However in some cases identified marketing campaigns were present only on two social media sites, rather than all three sites. In these circumstances an alternative food brand was selected based on the next most popular brand, determined by referring back to the tables I created in my thesis proposal. Ideally the replacement was made by the same company as the originally selected food brand; however when such an alternative could

not be found a brand from a similar product category was selected. For example I had initially selected Red Bull™ as one of the beverage brands from which I would collect data; however upon examining the social media marketing content of this brand I found that it did not meet the data collection criteria of my study. Therefore in this instance I collected data from another beverage brand that was still from the same product category (energy drink).

Also, as themes emerged from data analysis, it became useful to further engage in purposive sampling to aid in a wide range of examples of food brands using social media marketing to engage youth. For example Kraft Foods™ was a food brand initially selected for data collection. Further examination of this food brand revealed that the specific food product called Kraft Dinner™ appeared to be marketed to a youth consumer base, but did not meet data collection criteria based on the absence of the same marketing campaign on two or three of the social media sites. Rather than find a comparable replacement brand for Kraft Dinner™ I choose a different food brand that would allow for comparisons with previously collected data from a food brand that showed the use of a health appeal marketing technique. The Nature Valley™ brand used themes of a natural appeal and consumers provided minimal comments in response to posts made by this brand, compared to the level of response consumers had with other food brands. Therefore I choose another "natural-type" brand (Lundberg Family Farms™) to see if the findings from the Nature Valley™ brand possibly were a common thread with this type of food brand or just an isolated incident. Also although I had previously selected Pepsi™ as a brand from which to collect data, I later decided to collect data from the Gatorade™ brand which is still a food brand under the umbrella company Pepsi™. This switch in food brands was executed because I had already collected a large amount of data from the Coca Cola™ brand and felt

collected data from a sports drink beverage would provide more diversity in the data rather than to collect data from a second soft drink beverage brand.

Each food brand was examined to determine if it was advertised specifically to youth by use of a marketing campaign that appealed to youth on social media websites (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube). Although this criterion was difficult to ascertain, some indicators were used as signs that a food brand marketing campaign was oriented towards youth. A brand or specific marketing campaign within a brand was deemed as intended for youth if pictures or videos of youth were included in the marketing of the brand. A food brand was not considered to be directed at youth if the images of the campaign did not contain any pictures or cartoon images of youth. Images of cartoon characters either human or otherwise were also considered to be indicative of advertising meant for a youth audience. Another identifying attribute which indicated that a food or beverage brand marketing campaign was intended for youth consumers, was if it contained the "cool factor". Schor and Ford (2007) suggest that food advertisers portray themes of cool in their marketing campaigns intended for youth consumers through symbolic representation of oppositional attitudes such as depicting adults as inferior or portraying food in a manner that resembles drugs. Although I could not identify specific marketing campaigns which depicted adults as inferior there were some food brands that did portray the products in a manner resembling drugs or alcohol. In particular, the Monster™ brand and Nestle Perrier™ both used marketing techniques which caused their beverage products to resemble alcohol.

The following includes the final list of food brands from which data were collected and a brief description of the specific marketing campaign selected from each brand.

Coca Cola™ - Open Happiness:

This campaign was present on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. It was a global campaign which involved themes of sharing the Coca Cola™ product with friends and family, depicted through video, pictures and written text.

McDonalds Restaurant™ - 140 Character Films:

This campaign encouraged consumers to develop movie scripts of 140 characters in length which would be posted on Twitter. Winners of the competition had their film created using anthropomorphized McDonald's™ food characters and also won movie passes. Marketing content for this campaign was posted on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (contest winners' films).

Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ - Let's Go Reese's:

This campaign involved the promotion of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups'™ sponsorship of college football. The campaign made many references to college football (U.S.) and also involved videos of a host visiting universities to learn more about aspects of the football "lifestyle", including RV culture, mascots and fan attire. The marketing campaign was present on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

Oreo™ - Wonderfilled:

A big component of this campaign was the use of music artists that sang songs about Oreo™ cookies. The campaign also involved references to sports including hockey and basketball. Pictures and videos for the campaign involved cartoon depictions of fictional characters such as anthropomorphized Oreo™ cookies, the wolve and the three little pigs and a vampire. This campaign was shown on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

Skittles™ - #SkittlesGrin:

This campaign involved a storyline depicted through YouTube and Twitter with images of young teenagers. The main character was a red-headed socially awkward young male who gained popularity with the girls because his teeth were made of Skittles™, which were revealed when he smiled.

Nature Valley™ - The Quietest Show on Earth:

This campaign involved a contest in which winners attended an intimate outdoor concert with music artist Andrew Bird. The show attendants had to hike to the performance location. Pictures posted for this campaign were mainly shots of nature. This campaign was present on Facebook and Twitter.

Doritos™ - For the Bold:

This campaign involved advertising on YouTube and Facebook. Advertising content included posts about the release of limited edition food product flavours and videos of "supposed" consumers doing adventurous stunts to win an xbox ONE™.

Nestle Perrier™ - Perrier's Secret Place:

This campaign involved the launch of an advergame which allowed players to act as different characters living various lives and searching for a hidden Perrier™ bottle and "golden lady". Winners of the advergame could potentially win a trip to a party in a vacation destination. Content for this campaign was posted on Facebook and YouTube.

Monster Energy Drink™ - Monster Energy Cup 2013:

This campaign involved a promotion for the Monster Energy Cup 2013 which was a motocross event hosted by Monster Energy Drink™. The majority of the promotional content for this campaign was pictures and videos of the dirt bike rider competitors. The race track at the

event was plastered in the beverage brand label and the event involved a performance by a rapper and scantily clad women with the Monster™ brand logo on their attire. This campaign was present on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

Taco Bell™ - Feed the Beat:

This campaign involved Taco Bell™ providing free food to music artists while they were on tour. This campaign was present on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. It involved Taco Bell™ promoting music artists and some of the "fed" music artists coming to the Taco Bell™ headquarters to play their music and sample food products.

Lundberg Family Farms™ - Rice Cake Double Take:

This campaign involved a contest in which consumers were asked to upload pictures that displayed ways to utilize rice cakes which were either funny or yummy. Submission of photos allowed consumers to have a chance to win "yummy prizes" such as a year supply of rice cakes, a $150 Whole Foods™ gift card and more. This campaign was presented on Facebook and Twitter.

Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ - #PopTartsCrazyGood:

This campaign was presented on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The majority of the images for this campaign were of cartoon anthropomorphized depictions of Kellogg's Pop Tarts™. Main themes of the advertising included pop tarts trying to escape being eaten and associations of the brand with school, such as suggesting that a pop tart could be a school mascot or a prom date.

Gatorade™ - #WinFromWithin:

This campaign was presented on Facebook and Twitter. The campaign images were related to an array of sports such as baseball, tennis, football, soccer, etc. Messages for the

campaign referred to competiveness and placed an emphasis on winning. Some aspects of the campaign involved opportunities for consumers to create user-generated content such as creating personalized labels for Gatorade™ bottles.

Another aspect of the sample was the youth who made comments regarding content posted on the food and beverage social media websites. It was assumed that if a marketing campaign appeared to be directed at a youth then most of the consumers using the social media sites were youth. While I defined youth as those individuals who are aged 13 to 24 years old, there were comments posted by both younger and older consumers. A small handful of consumers included their age in their posts which made it possible to verify whether they were in the age range of youth. However in most instances there was no way to confirm that the consumers posting content on the social media sites were in fact youth. Although this was a significant shortcoming of the study, the same issue has been experienced by Richardson and Harris (2011) in their examination of marketing of sugary drinks and fast food to teens on social media. They noted that they could not definitively confirm that the branded food and beverage marketing they examined were viewed by adolescents and this limitation was attributed to the lack of reliable measurement methods to track users of social media. Another consideration of the potential demographics of the youth who have posted comments on food company sites, is that the majority were likely from urban areas of residence and were of higher socioeconomic status. This assumption is based on previous research that indicated that Canadians of this description have higher access to the Internet than those who live in rural locations and have lower incomes, which would therefore limit participation on social media sites (Dewing, 2012).

4.3 Collection of Data from Sample

Once a specific campaign from a brand from the sample had been chosen, then any content developed by the food or beverage brand concerning that specific campaign, that was posted on Facebook, Youtube or Twitter websites was collected. Content that made up the marketing campaign on these social media sites that was posted between Jan 1/13 and Nov 25/13 was collected. To avoid, excessive and unnecessary data collection, data were collected in three month increments starting with Aug 25/13 to Nov 25/13. The collected data from a food brand were then analyzed to see if theoretical saturation had been reached within that brand. If it was not achieved then further data collection of the previous three months of posted content occurred (May 25/13- Aug 25/13). This procedure was repeated until the theoretical saturation point was reached or data posted up to Jan 1/13 were collected.

Written messages produced by the food or beverage companies that were posted on the social media sites were copied and pasted into word documents. On Facebook the user can make a comment or a "share" that can also include a comment and both types of comments were collected. However some shares were not visible because of the privacy settings of the profile of the poster. Some comments that were simple in nature such as "haha" or "LOL" were not collected. Also comments that were not directly related to the food or beverage product were not collected such as discussions regarding music played in videos that are part of the marketing campaign or favorite sports teams. However comments about music or sports teams that included a reference to the food product or marketing techniques used on the social media sites were collected.

Photographs posted on Facebook or Twitter by food companies or consumers were copied and pasted into word documents. Unfortunately videos posted on social media websites

could not be copied. Therefore a series of screenshots were taken of the videos to provide a rough idea of the intended storyline of the video. The screenshots were placed in word documents and in some cases the verbal content of the videos posted on the social media sites was transcribed.

Another aspect of data collection that influenced the scope of data collected for this study was the type of information collected from consumers who were presumably youth. Only comments and user-generated content placed on food or beverage company social media sites were collected. Names, gender or personal profile pictures of consumers were not collected. Also further investigation as to the attributes of the consumer who had posted content on the food or beverage company social media website by going on the person's social media profile page was not conducted. The reasons for this procedure are twofold. Examination of each consumer profile traced by the comments placed on the social media sites would have been too cumbersome and may not have assisted in affirming that the consumer was within the age range of youth because of privacy settings and potentially fake identities portrayed by individuals. While some social media sites restrict membership based on age (e.g., users of Facebook must be 13 years or older), many young children own their own smartphones which allow them to browse the Internet and download apps, often without parent monitoring (Lobstein, 2013). Additionally examination of specific profiles on social media sites may be considered a breach of privacy of these individuals since they may only perceive that their friends would be viewing their profile, not a researcher.

Prior to data collection and during the development of the thesis proposal a pilot test was conducted using the "For the Bold" marketing campaign from the Doritos™ food brand. This brand was selected because previous writings on it indicated that it was marketed to teens and that the marketing techniques utilized were problematic (Center for Digital Democracy et al.,

2011). A complaint was issued to the Federal Trade Commission in October 2011 that indicated that the marketing techniques used for the Doritos™ brand were particularly deceptive towards adolescents due to the use of their covert advertising campaigns which involved video games, music, horror, sports, contests and social networking (Center for Digital Democracy et al., 2011). Given that the Doritos™ brand had been already identified as a food brand which implemented youth oriented marketing campaigns and was shown to utilize deceptive marketing techniques, the Doritos™ food brand was an ideal brand for use in a pilot test, since it was expected that a lot of relevant data would be available for collection. Data were collected from the Facebook, Twitter and YouTube social media sites for Doritos™. Preliminary data analysis was conducted on this collected data from the Doritos™ brand. The pilot test influenced and refined the procedures for further data collection and analysis, assisting in the creation of more specific data collection criteria and better organization of collected data.

One additional tool that was used for data collection was a research journal. A main component of the journal was procedural memos that were dated and written as reminders of enhancements and justifications for changes to data collection procedures. This journal also provided an area to note changes to the social media sites that occurred throughout the duration of data collection. For example on November 6/13 I found that YouTube suddenly included comments that were tagged "Google +", resulting in more comments than previously posted for the same videos. To accommodate for this change I decided to not copy comments from YouTube that were labelled as originating from Google + in order to maintain consistency with previous data collection procedures.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

This study did not require ethical approval because it involved the collection of publically available information. No personally identified information was collected from youth social media profiles, as it was not relevant to the purpose of the study. However some suggest that despite data on social media websites being publically available, concerns of privacy and anonymity should be given similar weight as is given in traditional qualitative research (McKee, 2013). Others suggest that researchers accessing individuals' information from social media websites is a not a violation of privacy (Wilkinson & Thewall, 2011). Wilkinson and Thewall suggest that individuals cannot reasonably expect to have their data protected from collection by researchers. The basis of this assertion is that any information posted on these social media sites becomes publically available. A study conducted at the University of Toronto which involved a content analysis of YouTube videos of parents and children interacting with toy food did not require ethical assessment from an Research Ethics Board (Lynch, 2012). An ethical review was not deemed necessary for this study due to the researcher not directly interacting with the individuals who created the videos and the videos being publically accessible (not requiring a password to view) (Lynch, 2012). Poynter (2010) also suggested that when data are available to the public domain (accessible without joining a group) then it can be considered available for research purposes. Wilkinson and Thelwall similarly indicate that data from social media websites identified through web browser searches can be ethically researched, as long as the creators of the content are kept anonymous, and that in these instances it is not normally necessary or desirable to obtain consent for using the data.

Therefore in the present study, data from social media websites that have been produced by youth participants were only collected if they were placed on the food company social media

sites. Comments from youth were not collected from their own personal profiles (e.g., Personal Facebook profile wall). In terms of ethical use of data derived from social media websites, the contingency point is the intention or expectation of the person who created the post (Poynter, 2010). For example in specific social network groups in which one has to sign up to be a member, people are likely posting comments with the expectation that other people similar to themselves will be viewing their comments, but they would probably not expect a researcher to be analyzing their comments (Poynter, 2010). However considering that food company social media sites are readily assessable by the public there may be a reasonable assumption that when a youth posts content on one of the food company social media sites that the content will be observed by individuals other than their online social network.

Anonymity of food companies or people from the general public who have placed comments on food company social media websites cannot be guaranteed. Although pseudonyms can be used for users of the social media websites from the general public, any direct quotes placed in research reports have the potential to be retrieved, and the creator identified, using search engines (Markham, 2008). However in the context of this study the potential to identify an individual based on a quotation from their posted comment, will not likely lead to harm to that individual because the comments were not of a sensitive nature. Nevertheless, discretion was exercised in using direct quotes from youth postings on the social media sites examined. Individuals' real names or screen names were not used in the writing of the study findings.

4.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of theoretical and logistical aspects. The theoretical aspect involved utilization of discourse analysis and the logistical aspect involved the use of ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software program.

4.5.1 Theoretical aspect of data analysis.

The specific method selected for the data analysis technique of this study was Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which is a general method that encompasses an exploration of power relationships. However, a specific form of CDA used in the present study was Foucault methodology which involves an examination of social cultural and historical context of texts.

4.5.1.1 Critical discourse analysis.

The particular research method that was used for data analysis in the present study was Critical Discourse Analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) involves a critical research approach in which the goal is to make power relationships explicit and to develop study findings that have practical relevance (Wodak & Meyer, 2003). Critical Discourse Analysis also involves an examination of the ways in which power relations produced by discourse are maintained or challenged through texts (Locke, 2004). However it is important to note that research methods, including the specific data analysis approach necessarily must be partnered with theory, since the tools of inquiry used in the analysis process are dependent on the theoretical approach taken by the researcher (Gee, 2001). The theoretical framework of the proposed study informed the data analysis process in regards to the types of data that were collected and that were considered salient to answering the research questions. However the consideration of an additional theoretical approach during the process of data analysis was helpful in guiding the particular aspects of the CDA. An appropriate theoretical approach which was utilized, that is congruent

with the theories outlined in the theoretical framework of this study, particularly the Critical

Social Theory, is that of Michel Foucault.

Discourse analysts analyze how language is used to construct versions of personal

experiences and events, by examining choices of terminology, grammatical constructions,

repetitions and use of metaphors, to determine how the text is used to produce the desired effect

(Willig, 2012). Critical Discourse Analysis does not constitute an explicit empirical method, but

instead consists of a cluster of approaches that share a similar theoretical base (Wodak & Meyer,

2003). Therefore there is no specified technique of collecting data for the purposes of CDA

(Wodak & Meyer, 2003). While there are several varieties of discourse analyses, they all share a

common thread of having a conceptualization of language as constructive and performative

(Willig, 2012). Another key feature of discourse analyses is that all forms involve an analysis of

the effects of discourse and how particular constructions of meaning through language can be

used to enable, prevent, empower or constrain action (Willig, 2012). Critical discourse analysts

are interested in the practices in which the production, reception and dissemination of text create

discourse which modulate power relations (Locke, 2004).

Research that involves CDA is inherently biased, albeit in a manner which focuses on

social problems and in which researchers are explicit about their sociopolitical stance (Wodak &

Meyer, 2003). Locke (2004) asserts that CDA has to be viewed as a political intervention with

its own socially transformative agenda and it is typical for critical researchers to align themselves

with a political agenda which challenges power bases of competing discourses. Critical

Discourse Analysis involves exploring the reasons that certain meanings have come to the

forefront of usage over time, while other meanings of terms have faded into obscurity (Bryman,

2008). A key concept of CDA is intertextuality which is a critical hermeneutic approach

involving the approach of analysis of text from the perspective of the author of the text, while drawing on the social and historical context from which the text was developed (Bryman, 2008).

5.1.2 Foucault methodology.

The application of a Foucauldian style discourse analysis based on Foucault's theoretical principles is a valuable methodology for the critical analysis of broad topics within the health field (Fadyl, Nicholls, & McPherson, 2012). An interesting feature of the methodology by Foucault and proponents of his work is that it is not specific in regards to step-by-step instructions as to how to perform a discourse analysis (Tamboukou, 1999). This feature of the Foucault methodology is purposive in that it allows for flexibility and adaption of his theoretical principles to specific study contexts (Fadyl et al., 2012). Therefore in the present study the aspects of the Foucault methodology that were relevant to answering the study research questions were incorporated into the data analysis process and adapted as appropriate.

Foucault used archaeology and genealogy as approaches to analysing texts, which involved a reflection of the nature and development of modern power (Tamboukou, 1999). A study by Fadyl et al. (2012) involved the application of Foucault's work as a methodological and theoretical guide to examine discourse related to vocational rehabilitation in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The study involved identifying how vocational rehabilitation has developed as a social practice, both historically and culturally and its social and political effects. This is a procedure that is consistent with a CDA approach which involves an examination of the social and historical context from which discourse arises (Bryman, 2008).

Therefore in the present study the social and cultural context of discourses indentified from the data collected on food marketing content directed to youth through social media websites was considered and discussed during data analysis. The historical contexts of the

discourses examined were also analyzed, however the texts that were collected for the historical

analysis were informed by the initial data analysis of the texts present on the social media sites

that contain food marketing content authored by the food companies and the youth consumers.

Essentially data analysis for the study involved two main levels of data analysis. The

initial level of data analysis involved analysis of texts collected from the social media sites of

interest, related to the specific food or beverage campaign that was part of the study sample. The

text consisted of content created by both the food or beverage companies and the consumers.

These data were categorized into codes and the codes then grouped into overarching themes,

with attention being paid to power relations. Results from this initial data analysis were then used

to inform the secondary part of the data analysis which drew on Foucaudian methodology. This

secondary part of the data analysis involved collecting related texts from other sources, including

news articles and food company websites which discussed marketing campaigns, to allow for an

understanding of the context of the discourses related to the food marketing to youth on social

media sites in terms of cultural and historical occurrences.

5.2 Logistical aspect of data analysis

5.2.1 Use of ATLAS.ti.

Data analysis was conducted with the aid of ATLAS.ti version 7.1.3, Berlin, Germany.

ATLAS.ti is a qualitative data analysis software program which assists researchers in their

qualitative analysis of textual, graphical, audio and video data. The documents that contain the

collected data related to the food or beverage brand marketing campaigns were uploaded into

ATLAS.ti. Each document uploaded into the ATLAS.ti program became referred to as a primary

document and all aspects of the project (uploaded documents and analysis content) were referred

to as the hermeneutic unit. Codes were developed in ATLAS.ti by highlighting a quote or image

and either creating a new code with a short text label or selecting a code already created.

Descriptions that defined the codes where attached to the code labels and a code list was

developed from ATLAS.ti output. See Appendix B for the list of codes and definitions created

during data analysis. Memos were also created using the ATLAS.ti program and were either

attached to specific quotes or were free standing.

5.4 Limitations and Delimitations

There were a few limitations to the study which constrained the nature of the data which

could be collected and analyzed. It was not possible to ascertain that the consumers posting

comments and user-generated content on food company social media sites were within the youth

age range specified for this study (13- 24 years of age). This limitation is due to the nature of

individual social media profiles which may not contain birthdates because of the individual's

decision not to include it in the profile or because of privacy settings selected. Therefore there

was no systematic way to ascertain the age of those individuals who posted content on the social

media websites which were used to promote food marketing campaigns. All three social media

that were used for data collection limit their users to be of age 13 or older, hence the motive for

selecting 13 years old as the minimum age to be classified as youth. However it is important to

note that it is still possible for individuals younger than 13 years of age to create social media

profile accounts by inserting a false birth date during profile registration. A survey of Canadian

children and adolescents conducted in 2005 revealed that 59% had taken on a different online

identity when using the Internet, including pretending to have a different age (52%) and

pretending to have different personality characteristics (26%) (Media Awareness Network,

2005). Another limitation to the study is that basic demographics of the individuals who posted

content on these social media websites which promote food marketing campaigns, could not be

determined systematically. For instance information on ethnicity, social economic status and even place of residence was not readily available on social media profiles. Richardson and Harris (2011) also noted the limitation of not being able to confirm with certainty that children or adolescents are users of food marketing aspects of social media. Another limitation to the study is that the study sample did not include participants who were not accessing social media sites. While social media sites appear to be widely used by youth, there may be some who do not access these sites, either due to personal or parental choice or because of geographic or economic constraints to Internet access.

Delimitations to the current study were that the forms of social media associated with food marketing to youth that were examined were limited to Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Another delimiter to the study was the aspects of food marketing presented on these social media websites. For this study, an examination of food marketing campaigns on the aforementioned social media websites mainly included those food companies that were members of the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) both in Canada and the USA, of which there were 19 and 17, respectively, at the time of data collection (Advertising Standards Canada, 2010; Council of Better Business Bureaus, 2013). The expected sample of youth who would be posting content on these food company social media sites was in the age range of 13 years to 24 years. However as mentioned previously it was not possible to confirm that this was the actual age range of individuals posting content pertaining to food company marketing campaign on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube. However, to mitigate this limitation as much as possible, marketing campaigns that appeared to be intended for youth were strategically selected for data collection.

Chapter 5: Results and Discussion

Data were organized according to two main types of data: 1) Consumers' responses based on exposure to social media food marketing 2) Marketing techniques utilized by the food brands sampled. Refer to Appendix C to view a collection of figures which present the relationships between the emergent themes and associated categories. Table 1 displays the themes that were related to consumer responses and marketing techniques.

Table 1

Themes of Data Categorized by Type

Type of Data	Theme
Consumer Responses	1. The Critical Consumer
	2. Consumer as Co-Marketer
Marketing Techniques	1. Food Brand Brings Happiness
	2. Eating is a Social Activity
	3. Stealth Marketing
	4. Food Product Associated with Cool Lifestyle
	5. Health Appeal
	6. Consumer Engagement

Tables displaying each theme and related categories are depicted throughout the results and discussion section. The results of the study are presented with examples from the data collected from the sampled marketing campaigns alongside consumer responses. Negative cases within the dataset were searched for and noted if present. Direct quotes from written or verbal

messages presented by food marketers or consumers on food brand social media sites are cited as examples from the collected data. The author of each quote is cited, except for cases in which quotes were made by consumers. The names of consumers were not used when citing quotations derived from the collected data; instead the food brand site from which the comment was collected was cited as the source to help protect confidentiality of the consumers. Quotes presented in the findings that were written by consumers were presented directly as posted by the consumer, in an unaltered state; therefore grammatical and spelling errors may be observed in data which originated from consumers. Due to the frequent occurrence of spelling and grammar errors seen among consumer quotes, the '[sic]' designation was not used to indicate mistakes that were originally present in the data.

The screenshots of images and videos posted on the food brand social media sites by food marketers and consumers were not included in the results of this document because of copyright issues. To capture findings derived from screenshots obtained during data collection, descriptions of images and videos from marketing campaigns or consumers' responses to those campaigns were described throughout the results and discussion section. Each theme was presented with a description and subsequent presentation of examples derived from the data. Themes related to consumer responses were presented first, followed by themes related to marketing techniques. Marketing technique themes were presented with specific examples from the data, followed by consumer responses to each marketing technique category that made up the themes related to marketing techniques. Consumer responses to the marketing techniques were presented to demonstrate the spectrum of responses including typical responses and negative cases.

Consumers responded to the marketing techniques presented by food marketers in basically either a positive or negative manner. However within consumer responses differentiations were evident in how consumers expressed positivity or negativity towards food companies and each other. Some consumers overtly praised or criticized food brands while others more passively described how their exposure to the food marketing messages impacted them, such as the influence of the food marketing on their emotions or weight status. While consumers mainly directed their commentary towards food brands, they also directed comments towards each other, creating an alternative pathway of marketing influence, since discussion revolved around food brands.

Food marketers used a variety of approaches in the implementation of food brand marketing campaigns, including the association of food brands with concepts such as happiness, social cohesiveness, leading a cool lifestyle and health. Food marketers also used subtle techniques, which may have been barely perceptible by the intended youth audience, termed "Stealth Marketing" in this study. An additional marketing technique that was used by food marketers was Consumer Engagement, which involved marketers attempting to have direct communication with consumers by asking questions and responding directly to consumer comments.

5.1 Consumer Responses

The way in which consumers responded to food marketing messages on the social media sites was partially captured by collecting the comments consumers posted on these websites. Consumer responses were essentially split between two main themes including consumers engaging in critical thought or actions and consumers acting as a co-marketers, assisting with the marketing of food products either directly or indirectly.

5.1.1 The critical consumer.

An interesting finding from the study was the critical nature of some of the posts made by consumers in response to the marketing content posted by food brands. While some consumers conveyed positive messages regarding food brands, such as praising marketing content or specific food products, others shared their displeasure with marketing techniques, food company practices and more, as listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Categories Included in The Critical Consumer Theme and Food Companies that Prompted each Consumer Response

Categories	Social Activist Consumer	Consumer Notes Power of Food Company	Recognition that Food Product is Not Healthy
Food companies	Coca Cola McDonald's Restaurant Oreo Kellogg's Pop-Tarts Monster Energy Drink Taco Bell Restaurant Reese's Peanut Butter Cups Nestle Perrier Skittles Gatorade Nature Valley Doritos	Coca Cola McDonald's Restaurant Oreo Kellogg's Pop-Tarts Nestle Perrier Gatorade Doritos	Coca Cola McDonald's Restaurant Oreo Kellogg's Pop-Tarts Reese's Peanut Butter Cups Gatorade Nature Valley Doritos

The collection of consumer responses from the study findings indicate that consumers are not just passive recipients of food marketing messages, but can view food marketing through a critical lens.

5.1.1.1 Social Activist Consumer

In their responses, consumers at times promoted an agenda of social change. Consumers who advocated for change called upon both other consumers and the food brands to influence such desired changes. Some consumers engaged in counter advertising which involved posting negative comments on social media sites which could encourage other consumers to stop consuming the advertised food products. For example a consumer posted a comment on the McDonald's™ restaurant Facebook page in the time period of August 20/13-September 19/13[1] describing the manner in which they believed the meat served at McDonald's™ was processed, which involved a very unappetizing description.

> "Ur eating food that was soaked in ammonia but b4 that the meat was deemed unsafe for dogs n cats, yummmm your lovin it" (C-McDonald's Restaurant™-F-Aug 20/13-Sept 19/13)[2]

Social media present a new challenge for food companies since negative opinions about products or specific companies can be expressed and shared among thousands or millions of people within mere hours via social media sites (Pfeffer, Zorbach, & Carley, 2014). Pfeffer et al. (2014) refer to this phenomenon of the rapid sharing of consumers' negative opinions of a company with others as an online firestorm, which has negatively impacted the reputation of companies such as McDonald's™ Restaurant which has experienced such online firestorms previously. These findings are consistent with the results of the present study in which many comments for some companies such as McDonald's ™ restaurant were quite negative in nature.

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[1] During initial data collection the dates of posts were not collected. Therefore the dates for some of the data collected from the first initial food brands had to be retrieved retrospectively. In some instances original posts on the social media sites were no longer available. Therefore, when the original data could not be located the date range for posts related to the marketing campaign selected were used in place of a specific date.

[2] Each quote from the data was cited to indicate the author of the quote (consumer or food company), the food company to which the quote pertains, the type of social media site the quote was posted on and the date that the quote was posted (Author-Food Company-Social Media Site-Date). To indicate the author of the quote, FC=Food Company and C=Consumer. To indicate the type of social media site the quote was posted on, F=Facebook, T=Twitter and Y=YouTube.

As well, there were commonalities in some comments such as concerns about the sourcing of meat McDonald's™ utilizes and ethical treatment of workers. These repeated comments provided by consumers could be a sign of these online firestorms having long lasting impacts on consumers' perceptions of food brands. While opening up a new world of marketing capabilities, social media also carry a potential risk for food brands and a sudden negative surge of commentary can have lasting effects that could carry through to impact profits. Such findings indicate that social media may allow consumers to have greater influence on the actions of food companies, resulting in greater public pressure that pushes companies to make changes which appease consumers. Phenomena such as online firestorms have the potential to tip the balance of power slightly in favour of the consumer, therefore evening out the playing field between consumers versus food companies.

In the present study some consumers voiced concerns about ethical sourcing of meat in responding to content posted by McDonald's™ Restaurant and involved consumers criticizing McDonald's™ for their meat sources. Consumers had concerns about both the quality of meat used in McDonald's™ food products and in how the meat (or eggs) were produced such as ethical treatment of the animals which sourced the food.

> "Dear McDonald's Canada
>
> You are supporting the intensive confinement of hens in tiny wire battery cages for their entire miserable lives. These cages are so small the birds are never able to walk, perch, fully stretch their wings or do nearly anything that comes naturally to them. Barren battery cages like these are considered so inhumane they have been banned by the entire European Union, Switzerland, New Zealand, and the states of California and Michigan. It's time for McDonald's Canada to implement a purchasing policy against eggs from suppliers that use battery cages as McDonald's in the European Union did 15 years ago. No socially responsible company should be supporting this type of blatant cruelty to animals." (C-McDonald's™ Restaurant-F-Aug 20/13)

Consumer's also criticized food companies on a moral basis and posted responses in which they criticized food companies for their practices including food ingredient sourcing and

treatment of employees. For example, a consumer posted a response in which indicated that they were boycotting Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ because of their unethical business operations.

> "Kelloggs refuses to do ethical business. REMOVE or label your GMO's, pay your workers a living wage, stop using conflict palm oil just to save a dollar and show us that you care about more than just profit. SHOW US!!! I'm boycotting until you do." (C-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-F-Nov10/13)

A study which involved analysis of a case in which activists hijacked a food company's Facebook page revealed that online activism efforts can be effective in prompting food companies to reformulate their products (Veil, Reno, Freihaut, & Oldham, 2015). The case study involved an analysis of how a blogger-activist engaged in techniques to influence Kraft Foods™ to change some of the ingredients in their food products. Some of the techniques used in the activism campaign involved promotion of a hoax video that displayed a label for Kraft™ Macaroni and Cheese which had a warning that it could harm children, and posting negative comments on the Kraft™ Facebook page. Findings from the case study revealed that the social activism efforts by the activist Vani Hari and her followers were effective in promoting changes to Kraft™ food products since following the negative publicity Kraft™ received they announced that they would be removing artificial dyes from certain macaroni and cheese products. One of the messaging strategies that activist Hari used on her blog and social media sites in her advocacy efforts was to encourage consumers to boycott Kraft™ and ask the company why it was selling inferior products to U. S. customers.

In the present study consumers also mentioned boycotting in their posts on food company social media sites and asked food companies tough questions about their product ingredients. Some consumers announced their intention to boycott particular food products for various reasons pertaining to the perceived wrongdoings of the food brand. For example, a consumer

posted a response to content posted by Nature Valley™ in which they indicated their intent to boycott Nature Valley™.

> "I took the GMOS out for them ... no more Natures Valley products in my home. Go head and edit my comments you creeps as long as you know people are catching on !!!!" (C-Nature Valley™-F-Aug 26/13).

At times consumers took on the role of social activist by encouraging other consumers to take action against food brands. For example a consumer posted content on the Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ Facebook page in which they urged other consumers to only buy Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ which were made in America,

> "check the labels buy Made in America,we need the jobs" (C-Reese's Peanut Butter Cups-F-Mar 26/13).

These consumer responses indicate that some youth consumers have an interest in creating social and political changes by addressing both food companies and their peers through social media. Study findings by Xenos, Vromen, and Loader (2014) indicated that among a sample of youth surveyed (ages 16-29 yrs old; n=3685) from Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, a positive relationship was found between social media use and political engagement.

In one instance in the present study a consumer called on the government to address food marketing in his or her response to content posted by McDonald's™ Restaurant on Facebook. The comment was a rhetorical question posed to the government or perhaps other consumers.

> "When will government start protecting people by stopping the advertising of disease causing diets to children? [3 likes]" (C-McDonald's Restaurant™-F-Aug 20/13-Sept 19/13).

Consumers also called on food companies to be advocates such as requesting that food companies conduct charity work and fair business transactions regarding their employees. For example a consumer posted a comment on the Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ Facebook page in which

he or she suggested that Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ assume an advocacy role in ethically acquiring

their food product ingredient sources.

"Hey Kellogg Company, I'm standing with orangutans, and I dislike brands that use conflict palm oil. Demand responsible palm oil from your suppliers and eliminate conflict palm oil from your products. The power is #InYourPalm." (C-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-F-Sept 17/13).

Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2006) refer to groups of consumers who have aversions to

certain brands and who take on a social activist role in voicing their opposition to corporate

domination, as anti-brand communities. The researchers conducted an in-depth analysis of anti-

brand websites which were in opposition to Walmart™, Starbucks™ and McDonald's™.

Findings from the study indicated that anti-brand communities form to provide a support

network to achieve common goals and to provide a resource hub for taking action. Through anti-

brand communities consumers were able to able to publicize unethical marketing techniques and

unethical food company practices. Hollenbeck and Zinkhan noted that the Internet provided

attributes such as speed, convenience, anonymity and virtual information which enhanced

consumers' social activist efforts.

In addition to criticizing food brands, consumers also had a tendency to criticize each

other at times, either in direct response to comments posted by other consumers, or towards

consumers as a collective whole. One consumer wrote a post in response to a video posted by

Doritos™ on YouTube which seemed to be aimed at other consumers who had commented on

the Doritos™ commercial:

"Are you guys serious? You do realize the good looking guy with the perfect hair, cool clothes, and muscular body is a paid actor, right? Please tell me you didn't think this was real. It's staged. Obviously staged. [8 likes]" (C-Doritos™-Y-Oct 22/13).

A number of comments involved consumers directing their comments at other consumers

in a manner which was as much educational as conversational. A consumer posted a comment

that appeared to be directed at other consumers who had responded to a video posted by Coca

Cola™ on YouTube.

> "I am into advertising and marketing too and I can tell you, increasing sales though they
> did was not their first and main intention in this advertisement. One of the things Coke
> has done to set itself apart from the others is just not to provide a drink every now and
> then but a lifestyle you can relate to.....who doesn't want a hug every now and then? &
> Coke showcasing it's not all about selling units just ensured more units gets sold when
> related to the feeling of togetherness & reliability." (C-Coca Cola™-Y-Nov 2/13).

The 'Social Activist Consumer' category demonstrated how some consumers attempted

to advocate for social change through the use of social media, thereby potentially influencing

both food companies and peers. In reference to the theoretical framework presented by Story et

al. (2002) which combined the Social Ecological Theory and the Social Cognitive Theory, the

'Social Activist Consumer' category illustrates the interplay of influence between youth and their

social environment. While youth may be being influenced by their exposure to social media food

marketing, this category shows how youth are attempting to exert their own influence on outside

entities. The media theories (Cultivation Theory and Media Dependency Theory) that were used

as part of the theoretical framework that guided the study may also be used to explain the Social

Activist Consumer category, since these theories refer to a bi-directional relationship between

media and consumers (Gerbner et al., 1986; Ball-Rokeach, & Defleur, 1976). This category

demonstrates how youth consumers exert influence on food companies via their communication

through social media.

5.1.1.2 Consumer notes power of food company.

Some consumers made posts which described the consumers' beliefs that certain food

companies were being dishonest in their marketing messages or in the presentation of their

company to the public. One consumer critically described how Coca Cola™ engaged in

unethical business practices which meant detrimental effects to consumers, the environment and

Coca Cola™ employees for the purpose of maximizing company profits.

> "All I know is this is one of the biggest faceless corporations out there. All they care
> about is profit, and will take whatever means to obtain it, be it inferior product such as
> high fructose corn syrup, aspartame, their use of pcb's, or their caramel creation process.
> The amount of environmental damage that they done in the name of profit and business
> is staggering. Their treatment of employees world wide is shocking. Please don't believe
> what corporate bought media has to say about this corporation, it's all twisted truths and
> lies, they care about nothing but money. (3 likes)" (C- Coca Cola™-F-Aug 28/14).

Consumers also posted comments which alluded to the financial power of the food

companies. In response to content posted by Coca Cola™ on YouTube, a consumer posted a

comment that criticized other consumers for being naive about the power possessed by the Coca

Cola™ company.

> "So people just figured out that a big capitalist empire that sells an unhealthy product
> owns lots of security cameras" Um, what?" (C-Coca Cola™-Y-Oct 31/13).

Comments by consumers that were critical in nature were observed across all food brands

examined. On the surface it appears that food brand social media websites could be considered

an ideal speech situation as described by Thompson (1981) (in reference to Habermas' Critical

Social Theory), as a situation in which all people have an equal opportunity to engage in

discourse, in a manner unconstrained from authority. At first glance it may seem that such

critical comments from consumers on food brand social media sites are evidence of a free speech

situation. However it is important to note that the food companies have control over their social

media websites in terms of being able to delete comments and to disable the comments feature.

Among the data collected from the Kellogg's Pop-Tart™ brand there was a consumer comment

in which the consumer indicated that Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ kept deleting their comment, likely

because it was slightly negative towards the food brand. However the consumer was persistent in

reposting their comment and the marketer may have finally given in or missed that it had been

re-posted. Consumers do have the opportunity to post comments about food brands on their own personal social media site profiles without concern of their comments being deleted by food marketers.

5.1.1.3 Recognition that food product is not healthy.

Some consumers commented on the healthfulness of advertised food products, at times indicating that the food products had unhealthy attributes such as being too high in sugar, calories or fat. For example a consumer posted a comment on the Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ Facebook page in which they suggested that the food product was too high in added sugars.

"Too much sugar! (C-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-F-Sept 5/13).

In a limited number of occurrences, consumers posted comments in which they requested that food companies offer healthier options such as smaller portion sizes or products made without ingredients perceived to be unhealthy such as Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), sugar or preservatives. One consumer posed a question on Facebook to Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™, regarding the use of a preservative ingredient.

"Is it possible to stop adding TBHQ preservative & use another preservative? Please."
(C-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-F-Nov 13/13).

There were a few instances in which consumers requested that food brands offer gluten-free products. For example one consumer posted a comment on the McDonald's™ Restaurant Facebook page which suggested that McDonald's™ provide more gluten-free options in their menu.

"Have more gluten free options." (C-McDonald's Restaurant™-F-Aug 20/13-Sept 19/13).

A handful of consumers believed that certain food products contained poisonous ingredients. A consumer who posted a comment on the Gatorade™ Facebook page indicated their belief that Gatorade™ contained unsafe ingredients.

> "So you poison us for your entire career then it's okay because when we notice and get pissed, you change the formula? Hope your using pure cane sugar and not genetically modified beet sugar, your label sure doesn't state that, beet sugar is just as bad as high fructose corn syrup" (C-Gatorade™-F-Aug 28/13).

In some causes consumers had false perceptions about food products such as thinking that they contained poisonous substances. It is valuable to know what beliefs consumers have about food products as it may demonstrate ineffective communication channels from consumer awareness campaigns. Among a sample of 1008 U. S. women (ages 25-55 years old) surveyed, it was found that those who had fears of specific food ingredients such as high-fructose corn syrup tended to overestimate the perceived risks of consuming the avoided food ingredient and tended to receive more information from the Internet rather than other sources such as television compared to those who did not avoid specific food ingredients (Wansink, Tal, & Brumberg, 2014). While it may not be detrimental that consumers avoid consuming sugar-sweetened beverages based on misperceptions in some cases it could cause consumers to make less healthy choices when in situations such as eating at restaurants. For example among the consumer responses, one consumer posted a comment on the MacDonald's™ Facebook site stating the following:

> "Has no vegan options....except salad that has antifreeze and other chemicals on it. Sigh [2 likes]" (C-McDonald's™ Restaurant-Facebook-Aug 20/13- Sept 19/13).

This consumer will likely avoid salad when eating at McDonald's™ restaurant because of his or her belief of it containing poisonous substances and this ingredient avoidance could

possibly extend to other restaurants, resulting in the consumer avoiding the consumption of green

leafy foods which are nutrient rich.

Some consumer responses involved consumers expressing their belief that health issues

such as diseases were linked with consumption of the advertised products. For example a

consumer wrote a comment on the McDonald's™ Restaurant Facebook page which accused

McDonald's™ for causing obesity among Americans.

> "You guys are the reason why 1/3rd of America is obese... Your discraceful [2 likes]" (C-McDonald's Restaurant-F-Aug 20/13-Sept 19/13).

In two responses from the dataset consumers indicated that consumption of the advertised

food product resulted in them gaining weight. These responses were posted on the Reese's

Peanut Butter Cups™ Facebook website and the Doritos™ YouTube website. In the comment

posted by a consumer on the Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ Facebook page, the consumer

claimed that Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ were addictive and had caused them to gain weight

because of frequent consumption.

> "I gained 27 lbs. Eating two of these a day they are addicting watch ouy..." (C-Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™-F-Nov 23/13).

In some responses consumers complained of the advertised food product making them

physically sick, such as vomiting. This type of response was seen on the social media sites for

the fast food restaurants sampled. A consumer posted a comment on Twitter in which they

indicated that eating at Taco Bell™ Restaurant made them sick.

> "@pitchforkmedia @passionpit @NeilHamburger Taco Bell gave me diarrhea." (C-Taco Bell Restaurant™-T-Aug 25/13).

There were some consumer responses in which consumers alluded to weight stigma, that

involved consumers commenting negatively about people with an overweight or obese weight

status, usually in connection to the advertised food product. A consumer posted a comment that indicated feelings of weight stigma on the Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ Facebook page which seemed to be directed to another consumer's post.The commenter seemed to harbour the view that obesity was due to personal deficits of individuals, discrediting the role of the social environment in the North American obesity issue.

> "Sure. Pop-Tarts are the cause of obesity. It's totally not caused by laziness and fast food fascination. I can see it now: A kid walking up to a 300 - 400 lb man and asking why he's so fat, just for him to reply 'I ate a lot of Pop-Tarts.'" (C-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-F-Oct 5/13).

Some consumers indicated that they were engaging in sedentary activities in relation to consumption of the advertised food product. These comments were seen among posts on the social media sites for the Gatorade™ and Doritos™ food brands. A consumer who posted a comment in response to content posted by Gatorade™ on Facebook, expressed his or her belief that most consumers who drank Gatorade™ were not athletes but rather tended to engage in sedentary activities such as playing video games.

> "I think I'll stick to drinking Gatorade and then doing nothing productive aside from playing xbox, like most others. Lol" (C-Gatorade™-(F)-Oct 12/13).

Findings from the 'Recognition that food product is not healthy' category indicate that a number of youth are aware that many advertised food products are less healthy products which could be linked to health-related issues with prolonged, excessive consumption. However, some instances of consumer responses indicated beliefs that were based on erroneous information, such as obesity bias attitudes or belief of food containing poisonous substances. Some of the extreme statements made by consumers regarding food products could be due to exposure to counter-advertising campaigns, which demonstrates the need to be careful that messaging is accurate, so that consumers are not mislead.

5.1.2 Consumer as co-marketer.

In many cases consumers engaged with food brand marketing content in such a way as which could be deemed as marketing. As shown in Table 3 the ways in which consumers engaged with the food brand as co-marketers varied from merely providing positive reviews of the food brand to actively creating marketing content such as images or videos. Many responses indicated that consumers engaged in food marketing themselves in the sense that they were potentially influencing their peers through their commentary.

Table 3

Categories Included in Consumer as Co-Marketer Theme and Food Companies Which Prompted each Consumer Response

Categories	Consumer Endorsement of Food Product	Consumer is Interested in Purchasing Food Product or Brand Merchandise	Consumer Actively Attempting to Collaborate in Marketing
Food Companies			
	Coca Cola	Coca Cola	McDonald's Restaurant
	McDonald's Restaurant	McDonald's Restaurant	Skittles
	Reese's Peanut Butter Cups	Reese's Peanut Butter Cups	Gatorade
	Oreo	Oreo	Lundberg Family Farms
	Monster Energy Drink	Monster Energy Drink	
	Taco Bell Restaurant	Taco Bell Restaurant	
	Kellogg's Pop-Tarts	Kellogg's Pop-Tarts	
	Nestle Perrier	Nestle Perrier	
	Skittles	Skittles	
	Nature Valley	Nature Valley	
	Gatorade	Gatorade	
	Doritos	Doritos	
	Lundberg Family Farms	Lundberg Family Farms	

5.1.2.1 Consumer endorsement of food brand.

Many consumer responses indicated that consumers held positive regard for the marketing techniques used by food companies and praise of food brands was seen for comments made in response to content posted on social media sites for all food brands sampled. For example a consumer posted the following response on the Facebook page for Lundberg Family Farm™,

> "If you guys are doing new flavors I will surely love them. Thank you for all the great food!" (C-Lundberg Family Farm™-F-May 8/13).

Although the comment seemed to be aimed directly at Lundberg Family Farm™, by providing positive feedback towards the company, the comment could also influence other consumers who were exposed to it. For example, if a friend of the person who posted the comment sees this comment on their friend's Facebook wall, they may read it and consider trying a Lundberg Family Farm™ product because their friend had said that it was "great food".

Youth may compare their own attitudes towards the advertised food products with those of their peers and then change their attitudes to be more in line with those of their peers as a way to gain greater social acceptance. In fact youth may mimic the ways in which their peers describe or depict their engagement with the advertised food product. Findings reported by Bevelander, Auchutz, Creemers, Kleinjan, and Engels (2013) indicated that youth participants of mainly European or Dutch decent (N=118, Mean age= 11.14 ± 0.79), adjusted their food intake (candy) to be similar to the amount consumed by a peer during an experimental design involving implied online interaction with a confederate (computer game with web cam capability).Findings by Richard, and Guppy (2014) indicate that among a survey of Facebook users (n=215, ages 16-24

years old), the number of likes on a product Facebook page and friends' 'liking' of a product on Facebook positively influenced consumers' purchase intentions.

Some consumer responses involved consumers posting comments which included phrases that were used in the marketing campaign observed on the social media sites. For example some consumers repeated food brand slogans such as consumers posting the phrase "for the Bold" on the Doritos™ social media sites which is in reference to the Doritos™ For the Bold marketing campaign.

While repeating the slogan of a food brand may at first glance seem to be an innocuous act, food brand exposure repetition could create an increase in brand familiarity among youth, which has been linked to greater brand confidence and purchase intentions among consumers (Laroche, Kim, & Zhou, 1996). In an experimental study involving university students (n=142), it was determined that mere brand exposure was just as effective as affective conditioning (pairing brand with emotive stimuli) in influencing brand choices (Baker, 1999). In the context of the present study, some consumers engaged in repeating slogans for the Coca Cola™ brand particularly in response to a post made by Coca Cola™ on Facebook, in which the food brand asked consumers the following question:

> "What is your favourite Coca-Cola slogan from the past?" (FC-Coca Cola™-F-Jan 31/13).

When consumers posted the slogans of Coca Cola™ from past and present on the Coca Cola™ Facebook page they were exposing themselves and other consumer responders to repeated exposure of the food brand advertising messages. Additionally, depending on consumers' privacy settings on their own Facebook profiles, they may also be exposing all the people on their 'friend list' to Coca Cola™ marketing messages, which can be considered a "mere exposure" incident. Based on the findings of Baker (1999) it could be suggested that the

effects of this mere exposure could be on par with the effects of exposure to full Coca Cola™

marketing messages which tend to involve affective conditioning techniques such as linking

feelings of happiness with the Coca Cola™ beverage. Thus consumers who repeat food brand

slogans by posting them on social media sites could be potentially influencing their peers to

purchase these advertised brands, or at the very least increasing brand familiarity among their

peers.

At times comments made by consumers indicated attitudes which involved the valuing of

large portion sizes of food or beverages, leading to excessive consumption. The mentality of

bigger is better was expressed by consumers in responses posted on the Reese's Peanut Butter

Cups™ Facebook page.

> "Big cups aren't big enough, bring on the half-pounders! XD [18 likes]" (C-Reese's
> Peanut Butter Cups™-F-Nov 23/13).

A study by Dubois, Rucker and Galinsky (2012) provides a potential explanation as to

the reasoning that some consumers prefer to select larger portions when available for purchase.

The researchers conducted six experiments (with undergraduate students from the U. S.) in

which they manipulated the feeling of power among participants (low power and high power

conditions) while exposing them to small and large portions of food or beverage products.

Findings from the study indicated that consistently, participants in the low power condition

selected larger portion sizes of food products, more often than those in the high power condition,

suggesting that portion size may be an indicator of status among consumers.

Findings from a survey of adolescents (n=3831) from eight U.S. schools regarding their

perception of the sugar-sweetened beverage intake of their peers and their own consumption of

sugar sweetened beverages, revealed that 76% of participants overestimated their peers typical

daily intake of sugar-sweetened beverages (Perkins, Perkins, & Craig, 2010). Results from the

study also indicated a strong relationship between students' perception of increased intake of sugar-sweetened beverages among their peers and increased personal consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, which the researchers suggest may demonstrate how perceived peer norms of beverage consumption could lead to excess caloric intake among adolescents. Youth posting comments on social media sites about their personal consumption of food products can collectively create a perceived norm of food product consumption perceived by the youth that are exposed to those messages. Based on Media Dependency Theory, youth consumers may use social media and the messages they are exposed to by food companies and their peers to determine normal eating behaviours in the context of membership in a typical youth group (Ball-Rokeach, & Defleur, 1976).

5.1.2.2 Consumer has purchased or intends to purchase food product or merchandise associated with brand

Some consumers indicated that they had a desire to purchase products which contained food brand logos or were an inherent part of specific marketing campaigns. Particularly in the case of Monster Energy™ in which logos associated with the Monster Energy™ brand embodied a certain "cool lifestyle" consumers wished to obtain items which contained the food brand logo. For example, after viewing content posted by Monster Energy™ on Facebook on October 11/13, a consumer indicated that they wanted to purchase the same helmet which was worn by a Monster Energy™ sponsored motor-cross rider and subsequently adorned with the green 'M' symbol synonymous with the Monster Energy™ brand.

"Bring it I want that helmet" (C-Monster Energy™-F-Oct 11/13).

Some consumers indicated that their exposure to food brand marketing campaigns influenced them to purchase and consume advertised food products. A consumer responded to a

video posted by Oreo™ on YouTube in which they indicated that seeing the commercial

prompted them to purchase Oreo™ cookies.

> "The commercial made me buy Oreos :) This is awesome! You guys should make a
> Mother's Day one :)" (C-Oreo™-Y-June 10/13).

Some consumers indicated that they consumed the advertised food product in the past or

present by describing their eating behaviours in relation to the advertised food product. For

example some consumers revealed that they were consuming the food product at the same time

they were observing the marketing content presented by certain food brands. One consumer

posted a comment on the Oreo™ Twitter page in which they whimsically proclaimed their love

for Oreo™ and shared with everyone the fact that they were consuming the food product.

> "@Oreo You're my love and im eating my love now :) pic.twitter.com/gNz0zICw0G"
> (C- Oreo™-T-June 15/13).

Youth's exposure to comments by their peers which describe eating behaviours, may

create beliefs related to the advertised food products and concerning what is considered normal

consumption patterns of these types of foods. These beliefs about social norms regarding eating

behaviours may translate into changes in eating behaviours that appear more normal based on

feedback from peers. This premise has been supported by the study findings of Pelletier,

Graham, and Laska (2014) in which an association was found between young U. S. adults' (n=

996, mean age 21.6 ± 4.4) perceptions of the eating behaviours of their friends and their own

eating behaviours. Young adults who perceived a higher intake of sugar-sweetened beverages

and fast food among their friends, had a greater intake of these items themselves. In a field

experiment with university students (n= 687, ages= 17- 34 years old) conducted by Mollen,

Rimal, Ruiter and Kok (2013) it was found that exposure to descriptive social norms predicted

greater likelihood to consume the food product (salad or hamburgers) described in the message at

their school cafeteria. The explanation behind the study findings was that when participants

perceived a food product to be consumed by the majority of the peers in their social environment they were more likely to conform to this perceived social norm themselves. In the context of the present study the more youth that post messages on food product social media sites indicating that they have consumed the food product themselves the more likely that they may be influencing other youth consumers to perceive that consumption of the advertised food product is a social norm therefore encouraging their consumption of the product.

A few comments made by consumers referred to eating on the go and these comments were made by consumers in response to content posted by Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™. These comments involved consumers describing either how they consumed Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ while doing another activity or how they perceived the food as being designed for "eating on the run". One consumer commented positively how the portability aspect of Pop-Tarts™ was an attribute which made the food product superior to other products that were similar in nature.

> "Poptarts are the best grab em and go ya can't do that with a toaster streudel WOOT WOOT" (C-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-F-Sept 28/13).

Consumers made comments that indicated that they wanted to consume the product displayed on the food brand social media sites. For example a consumer posted a comment on the Gatorade™ Facebook page, in which they expressed their desire to consume a certain flavour of the Gatorade™ beverage.

> "Yum I want some frost gatorades right about now...." (C-Gatorade™-F-Sept 10/13).

Research by Harris, Bargh, and Brownell (2009) indicated that exposure to televised food advertising prompted increased food consumption which was attributed to the food advertising priming eating behavior. The findings of the present study in which consumers indicate that they want to eat the food product that is being advertised, points to the possibility that exposure to food marketing via social media could also result in eating behavior being primed. The one brand

examined for which consumers did not indicate that they wished to consume the product was the

Monster Energy™ brand. The Monster™ brand was marketed in a different manner than the

other brands. The Monster Energy Cup 2013 campaign did not involve explicit promotion of the

product. Instead the Monster Energy™ drink logo was placed on every possible surface at the

Monster Energy™ Cup race track and all over the competitors and promoters. This type of

marketing is a display of implicit persuasion which involves an indirect style of marketing.

Although consumers who viewed the Monster Energy™ social media sites did not say that they

desired the product perhaps the product is being inherently considered an integral part of the

extreme sports lifestyle of which they enjoy. Based on Critical Social Theory, this category in

which consumers communicate their past or intended purchases related to food brands,

demonstrates how food branding is part of the social environment or context influencing youth to

like and purchase foods and merchandise. Food brands do have power in shaping the food

preferences and subsequent eating behaviours of youth, which can have negative impacts on their

health if intake of some products is excessive (e.g., high in sodium, sugar, caffeine).

5.1.2.3 Consumer attempting to participate actively in marketing.

At times consumers posted content that they had created themselves in relation to food

brand marketing campaigns. Lundberg Family Farms™ encouraged consumers to post images or

videos which demonstrated that rice cakes were either "funny or yummy" as part of their "Rice

Cake Double Take" marketing campaign. In return for posting their images consumers became

eligible to win prizes distributed by Lundberg Family Farms™. For example Lundberg Family

Farms™ retweeted a post on Twitter which provided a link to a video posted by a consumer who

entered the Rice Cake Double Take contest. The consumer who was shown in the video was a

blonde female who appeared to be an older teenager or young adult. The video displayed time-

lapsed images of a rice cake being consumed bite by bite. At the end the girl was shown licking

her fingers and provided a written message under the video post:

> "Yummaayyyy mhmhmm.. #snacktimebitches #RiceCakeDoubleTake #smashin" (C-Lundberg Family Farms™-T-May 15/13).

Consumers made suggestions for new products they wished food companies to make

such as new flavours added to existing food product lines. A consumer who posted on the

Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ Facebook page, encouraged the food brand to create a new flavour of

Pop-tarts™.

> "Please try to make cheese cake pop tarts [9 likes]" (C-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-F-Aug 10/13).

Many posts were made by consumers requesting that food brands bring back food

product flavours which had been discontinued. Multiple consumers posted comments on the

Skittles™ social media pages requesting that Skittles™ replace their new apple-flavoured green

Skittle™ with the previous lime-flavoured green Skittle™ which had been discontinued.

> "@Skittles looks like she ate a green apple one, bring back lime please!" (C-Skittles™-T-Oct 1/13).

The theme of 'Consumer as Co-marketer' involved consumers engaging closely

with food marketers by following their marketing requests and entering food brand contests. By

youth engaging with food marketers on social media they are essentially engaging in free

advertising for the food brands. This theme also involved consumers potentially influencing the

eating attitudes and behaviours of their peers. The theme of 'Consumer as Co-Marketer' also

illuminates how food marketers utilize social media food marketing as a way to catalyze viral

marketing among youth peer groups. If food marketers can prompt a response from youth

consumers, a chain reaction of dialogue may begin in which youth tag their friends in their

comments posted on food brand social media sites, or at the very least all of the friends on their social media profile will be exposed to their comment via the news feed, thereby increasing the advertising reach efforts of the food brands exponentially (Harris et al., 2014). In this circumstance it appears that food brands attempt to make youth consumers feel that they are in control by providing their ideas and by having an open dialogue with the food company, yet this sense of control is really illusionary (Harrison, & Jackson, 2013). Ultimately, it is the food company that gains the most benefit from youth consumers spending their time engaging with them on social media, since essentially they are gaining free marketing labour from youth, in an unprecedented manner which was never before possible with previous technology such as television. Previously food companies could have only hoped that after being exposed to a televised food advertisement that a youth may share the details of that advertisement with a friend, extending the influence of the TV marketing beyond just the initial one person exposure. However with the advent of social media, food marketers can be fairly certain that youth will share their knowledge of food brands with their friends after exposure to social media food marketing, as socializing with friends is the purpose for which social media was invented.

The theme of Consumer as Co-marketer demonstrates how food brands have been successful in deceiving youth to believe that they are doing "fun" activities such as participating in competitions and creating new products, when in actuality food marketers are recruiting youth to market food products to their peers. This occurrence demonstrates the distorted communication phenomena described by Habermas, in which the true intentions of the communicator are not revealed, thus leading to deception and the reinforcement of power imbalances between youth and food brands (Ozanne, & Murray, 1995). Further examples of

consumer responses are provided in the following section, within the context of the marketing techniques used by the sampled food brands.

Marketing Techniques

5.1.2 Food brand targets emotions.

The theme 'Food Brand Targets Emotions' included a number of categories as listed in Table 4 which involved marketing techniques meant to evoke emotions (mainly positive) among consumers. These categories included 'Anthropomorphism of Food' which involved food being depicted as having human-like qualities and 'Food being Marketed as Something to be used for Play', which involved depictions of characters playing with food or a verbal description of food being used as a source of entertainment, rather than solely for satiation. Other categories included in this theme were the 'Food Product Associated with Happiness' category which involved images and written messages that presented feelings of happiness, such as people smiling while consuming the food product and the 'Incentives Offered by Food Company' category which involved prizes being offered to consumers for engaging in the creation of user-generated content which essentially assisted in the marketing of food products.

Table 4

Categories Included in Food Brand Targets Emotions Theme and Food Companies which Displayed each Marketing Technique

Categories	Anthropomorphism of Food	Food Company Markets Food as Something to be used for Play	Food Product Associated with Happiness	Incentives Offered by Food Company
Food Company	McDonald's Restaurant Oreo Kellogg's Pop-Tarts	Coca Cola McDonald's Restaurant Reese's Peanut Butter Oreo Kellogg's Pop-Tarts Nestle Perrier Skittles Gatorade Doritos Lundberg Family Farms	Coca Cola Oreo Taco Bell Restaurant Kellogg's Pop-Tarts Skittles Doritos	Coca Cola McDonald's Restaurant Reese's Peanut Butter Cups Nestle Perrier Nature Valley Gatorade Doritos Lundberg Family Farms

5.1.2.1 Anthropomorphism of food.

The concept of 'Anthropomorphism of Food' involved food brands utilizing humanized food product characters in their marketing campaign images and videos posted on their social media sites. McDonald's™ Restaurant depicted an entire cast of anthropomorphized food items in their *140 Character Films* marketing campaign, which they encouraged consumers to use as actors in the development of short film movie scripts. Each food character had a face and limbs, wore clothing and engaged in human-like activities. Some of the McDonald's™ menu items that were anthropomorphized included french fries, Big Mac™, Chicken McNuggets™, Chicken McWrap™ and McFlurry™. In a video posted by McDonald's™ Restaurant on their YouTube site on August 19/13, an anthropomorphized Big Mac™ character, complete with a drawn-on face and a white tuxedo was shown running away from the flames of fire from an explosion in true James Bond fashion.

The use of the 'Anthropomorphism of Food' marketing technique may have influenced consumers to refer to food products in an anthropomorphic manner as well. For example Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ anthropomorphized their Pop-tart™ product in marketing images and written messages posted on their social media sites. In response to viewing the marketing content produced by Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ for the #Pop-Tarts Crazy Good campaign, some consumers referred to the Pop-Tarts™ food product as if it were a living being with emotional feelings.

> "That's gotta be the worst thing for a pop tart, have your love staring at you, only to be ripped away from it and toasted alive for a kids breakfast enjoyment... But it tastes awesome!" (C-Kellogg's Pop-Tart™-F-Oct 20/13).

While most consumers responded to the 'Anthropomorphism of Food' technique by humoring the food companies and pretending that food products were living beings, as shown by numerous consumers submitting movie scripts that would be posted on the McDonald's™

Restaurant Twitter profile, for a chance to win prizes from the *140 Character Films* marketing

campaign, some commented on the absurdity of such a presentation of food.

"Y is food driveing ?" (C- McDonald's™ Restaurant-F-Aug 20/13-Sept 19/13).

In a couple of cases, consumers entered responses to the *140 Character Films* marketing

campaign that involved using the competition entry as a platform for delivering messages about

social justice.

> "McFlurry works at a fast food restaurant. She supports two kids on poverty wages while
> her corporate bosses earn billions. #**MakeMyFilm**" (C-McDonald's™ Restaurant-T-Aug
> 20/13-Sept 19/13).

The use of the 'Anthropomorphism of Food' marketing technique used by food marketers

may function as a sign post which acts to prime the constructs of playfulness and fun among

consumers (Nenkov & Scott, 2014). Nenkov and Scott conducted four experiments with

university age participants from the U.S. (mean age= 27-30.1 years old; n=40-92, per each

experiment) to determine the effect of exposure to whimsically cute products on indulgent

consumption. Findings of the study indicated that when consumers were exposed to products that

were whimsically cute (e.g., anthropomorphized products such as an ice cream scoop designed as

a woman, stapler designed as an alligator and cookies with faces on them) the construct of fun

was primed, which led to increased consumption compared to participants in neutral conditions.

Veer (2013) suggested that the use of anthropomorphism in marketing towards young

consumers (pre-school age) functioned as a method for increasing feelings of attachment towards

brands based on the encouragement of developing kinship between children and advertised

products. Veer drew on evolutionary psychology theories to describe how children exposed to

anthropomorphic branding creates feelings of kinship in which the children feel a connection or

relationship to the advertised products because the products are depicted as having human-like qualities like themselves.

The use of the marketing technique of 'Anthropomorphism of Food' that was used by some of the food brands sampled in the present study may seem like just a fun-loving, light-hearted marketing approach. However, some research findings and theoretical discourse suggests that exposure to anthropomorphism food branding may promote emotional attachments to food brands and prime the fun construct which could lead to increased consumption among youth.

5.1.2.2 Food company markets food as something to be used for play.

The 'Food Company Markets Food as Something to be used for Play' category involved food companies displaying their food products as items to be used for the entertainment of youth consumers rather than solely for the purpose of nourishment or satiation. Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ proposed inventive uses of Pop-Tarts™ besides just consumption such as the suggestion posted on Facebook.

> "We've seen phone cases designed to make your phone look like a Pop-Tart, but what about a Pop-Tart case designed to make your Pop-Tart look like a phone? It's the ultimate disguise. #PopTartsCrazyGood" (FC-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-F-Sept 14/13).

The Oreo™ cookie brand also framed Oreo™ cookies as objects that could be used in play. For example, Oreo™ posted an image on Facebook that had the following caption:

> "Wonder if you flipped an Oreo instead of a coin?" (FC-Oreo™-F-Oct 23/13).

Consumers did seem to be receptive to the form of play food companies sometimes associated with their advertised food products. In response to the picture posted by Oreo™ that suggested an Oreo™ be used in place of a coin, a consumer indicated the following,

> "I always flip Oreo during drinking games instead of a coin." (C-Oreo™-F-Oct 23/13).

Besides describing how consumers used the food products in play, some also demonstrated with posted images how they used the food products as instruments for fun and entertainment. For example a consumer posted a photo of himself on the Skittles™ Twitter page in response to content posted by Skittles™ on October 12/13. In the image the male consumer wore glasses and a headset and was shown holding Skittles™ in his mouth making the Skittles™ to appear to be a representation of multi-colored teeth, reminiscent of a rainbow.

Promoting food products as items to play with rather than just eat attaches new meanings to food and has the potential to influence youths' eating behaviours. Elliott (2008) previously reported findings from her content analysis of children's foods in Canadian supermarkets, which food marketers promoted food as a source of entertainment, that she suggested could potentially lead to mindless eating among youth. In a more recent article written by Elliott (2015) she observes the emergence of gamefication and marketing techniques of associating food with fun being applied to adult food products, in addition to those intended for youth. Elliott (2015) argued that the framing of less healthy food products as 'fun' distances those products from the negative consequences of their consumption and promotes excess consumption.

Research by Wansink, Just, Payne, and Klinger (2012) indicated that giving food items such as carrots fun or attractive names could increase consumption of those products, among elementary age children. Their research involved two studies at elementary schools in New York with children aged 8-11 years old (Study 1: n=147; Study 2: n=1017), in which the names of vegetable food items sold in the cafeteria were given fun names (and compared to no name given and neutral names). Findings of the research indicated that giving the vegetables special names such as "X-ray Vision Carrots" prompted the students to consume more than when the vegetables were not named or were given a neutral term such as "Food of the Day" (66% of

carrots consumed in fun name condition, compared to 32% in neutral name condition, in study one). While this study involved manipulating names of healthy food products, it may be possible that this increased consumption effect from exposure to fun names could also be applicable to less healthy food products. In the present study food marketers used the theme of fun and play in many of the messages and images posted on their social media sites

5.2.1.3 Food product associated with happiness.

Food companies attempted to create an association between their food products and happiness by presenting messages that explicitly or implicitly linked the food product with happiness. For instance Coca Cola™ frequently posted content for the Open Happiness campaign that included the word "happiness". A video posted by Coca Cola™ on YouTube on November 2/13 contained a screenshot with a solid red background. Words in the middle of the screen were written in white colored font which read "Eating together is a primary source of happiness." The Open Happiness campaign promoted by Coca Cola™ has been examined in-depth previously by Svendsen (2013), who found that Coca Cola™ was intentional in ensuring that their digital marketing campaign was congruent with their mission statement that included the goal of "inspiring moments of optimism and happiness." Svendsen noted that one method Coca Cola™ used to meet their mission statement goal was to place the marketing emphasis on promoting the theme of happiness rather than the merits of the Coca Cola™ beverage, which was achieved by marketing happiness in the forefront of the campaign's YouTube videos.

Food companies also tried to associate their food products with the feeling of happiness by posting images of characters smiling while holding or consuming their product. In a scene from a video posted by Taco Bell™ restaurant on YouTube on November 4/13, a male musician from the band "New Politics" was shown holding a food product called "Cinnabon Delights,"

which was offered by Taco Bell™. The musician wore a huge smile on his face as he lifted the

product to his mouth in preparation for consumption. Positive images and feelings paired with

food product consumption involve behavioral modification using positive reinforcement similar

to Pavlovian classical conditioning, with recent experiments in this area indicating that food-

paired cues can promote motivation to obtain and consume food (Colagiuri, & Lovibond, 2015).

Based on Cultivation theory, the marketing technique of associating food with happiness may

cultivate beliefs regarding the purpose of food among youth. As youth observe images of

characters in marketing campaign promotional materials playing with food they may develop the

belief that entertainment is a purpose for which food is used. For instance, a youth who observed

a YouTube video posted by Coca Cola™ on that was part of the Open Happiness campaign

demonstrated that the youth had absorbed the messages presented to them by Coca Cola™,

> "Unhealthy, but delicious. Just like french fries. You eat/drink if you want. And when you do, you get happy, 'cause it's goooood. It opens the happiness in you (well, maybe not you, but other people)." (C-Coca Cola™-Y-Oct 31/13).

This marketing technique of associating food products with happiness also draws on the

implicit model of persuasion in which positive feelings towards the food product are processed at

the subconscious level (Perloff, 2010). Some responses involved consumers describing how their

exposure to specific food marketing campaign components resulted in them feeling positive

emotions. A consumer who observed a video on YouTube posted by Coca Cola™ indicated that

they experienced an enhancement of mood due to exposure to Coca Cola™ marketing,

> "This was amazing! Really brightened up my day :) Should have more future commercials like this!" (C-Coca Cola™-Y-Oct 31/13).

For example the "Open Happiness" campaign by Coca Cola™ aims to evoke happiness

from consumers and some consumers did report feeling happier after being exposed to marketing

from the Open Happiness campaign. Therefore comments from consumers in which they

indicate the feelings they have experienced after exposure to food marketing on social media may provide a preliminary glance as to the depth of the effect of this type of food marketing towards youth.

While some consumers reported the development of negative feelings after being exposed to food marketing on social media, these responses were relatively small compared to those in which consumers reported positive feelings or feelings of wishing they could be part of the advertised activities. Findings by Smith (2013) indicated that among 6500 UK participants who were regular users of Facebook, 36% experienced a strong positive emotional response after exposure to the selected brand Facebook pages (including some in the food and drink category). Among participants who experienced a strong positive emotional response to brand Facebook page exposure, 70% were likely to post a positive comment on Facebook regarding the brand and 52% were likely to share brand content on Facebook. Overall, it was found that consumers who experienced strong positive emotions in response to viewing brand Facebook pages were more likely to promote the brand than those who did not experience such an emotional response. Therefore it is possible that food brands that are successful in evoking positive emotional responses from youth consumers will have greater success in recruiting youth as co-marketers, aiding in the viral distribution of food brand marketing campaign content.

Another potential problem with social media food marketing promoting positive emotional responses in youth consumers is that positive mood induction may increase food intake among youth. Based on an experimental research design with female youth participants (n=64, ages= 18-23 years old), involving exposure to memory and mood manipulations (cued to remember previous meal and induced positive mood), during exposure to a movie and a lunch meal with snacks, it was found that induction of a positive mood increased food intake (Collins,

& Stafford, 2014). Also, while cueing participants' memories of the previous meal resulted in lesser food intake than other conditions, pairing the memory-cue condition with the positive mood induction reduced the effect of lesser food intake. Another study involving young children (n=112, age= 7-10 years old) from the Netherlands revealed that exposure to positive or negative movie clips resulted in greater modelling of peer food intake compared to exposure to neutral movie clips (Bevelander, Meiselman, Anschutz, & Engels, 2013). The experimental study involved participants being paired with a confederate who either ate no food or ate 10 candies, and being exposed to a positive, negative or neutral movie clip. Participants were offered a bowl of candy and a glass of water to consume during the movie clip and were instructed to consume as much or as little as they desired. Bevelander et al. (2013) suggested that the children who were exposed to the positive or negative movie clip paid greater attention to the movie than children in the neutral movie clip condition, resulting in mindless eating in which children may have subconsciously defaulted to modelling the food consumption of their peer.

In the present study some consumers posted comments in which they indicated how they wished they could engage in activities depicted in images or videos displayed as part of the food brand marketing campaigns. For example a consumer who posted a comment on the Monster Energy Drink™ Twitter site indicated his or her desire to be at the Monster Energy Cup 2013 event.

> "That look's like so much fun, "Dam I wish I was there". :)" (C-Monster Energy Drink™-T-Oct 19/13).

Such marketing as that used by Monster Energy™ which involved sensationalizing events that were part of the brand's marketing campaign may have aimed to sell a certain type of cool lifestyle to youth that creates the belief among youth that they can be part of this cool lifestyle, in part, by purchasing and consuming the advertised food products. By consumers

indicating that they wished they could be part of an event (such as the Monster Energy™ Cup 2013), it demonstrates that marketers have succeeded in developing a yearning among their target audience which they may perceive as only being partially quelled by consuming the advertised food products on a regular basis. Seeing that youth consumers are developing emotional responses due to their food marketing exposure on social media, it can be safe to say that food marketers are succeeding in their goals of developing the perception among youth that food products are attached to certain positive feelings or desirable lifestyles.

In the context of the present study the combination of exposure to marketing techniques which evoke positive and negative emotions among youth consumers and consumer comments which describe consumption of food products could promote social modeling of peer food intake. For example youth may watch a video on a social media food brand site which evokes an emotional response and then scroll down further to read consumer comments which may indicate behaviours that could promote excessive caloric consumption, thus leading to youth copying the described eating behaviour.

In a few instances consumers indicated that being exposed to specific components of the food brand marketing provoked negative emotions. A consumer posted a comment on the Nestle Perrier™ Facebook page in which they described how playing the Nestle Perrier™ advergame designed for the Perrier's Secret Place marketing campaign made them feel so bad about themselves that they ended up crying.

> "I have cried over this game. that is CRAZY, I know, but I find my brain simply incapable of solving this puzzle. I feel stupid and worthless playing this game." (C-Nestle Perrier™-F-April 6/13).

The marketing technique of 'Food Product Associated with Happiness' did appear to be a successful marketing approach based on many consumer responses to this technique being

positive in nature, at times consumers explicitly indicating their feelings of happiness. While a few consumers posted comments that indicated negative feelings from exposure to the marketing technique of 'Food Product Associated with Happiness', the majority of consumer responses were typically positive.

5.2.1.4. Incentives offered by food company.

The marketing technique of 'Incentives Offered by Food Company' was used by food brands as a reward system to encourage consumers to develop user-generated content that was often required in order to be entered in a draw to be eligible to win a prize. Lundberg Family Farms™ offered a competition to consumers in which they could win prizes including a one year supply of rice cakes. In order to be eligible for the prizes offered by Lundberg Family Farms™ consumers had to take pictures or videos of rice cakes which were intended to present rice cakes as either funny or yummy.

> "Get ready to do a #RiceCakeDoubleTake! Forget those tasteless disks of pure blandness, that make a better frisbee than afternoon snack. We've created some yummy recipes for our new flavors that prove just how delicious, satisfying and versatile our rice cakes can be. Visit our gallery of "funny" and "yummy" rice cake ideas, and while you're there, snap your own pic for a chance to win! http://shout.lt/hFcD" (FC-Lundberg Family Farms™-F-May 8/13).

Although the majority of marketing campaigns did not mention age restrictions associated with entering the competitions or draws promoted on their social media sites, the conditions of use for the social media sites that were examined in this study include the user being 13 years of age or older. Given the age restriction inherent with social media site usage participant entry into competitions offered by food companies on social media sites would technically be restricted to consumers aged 13 years and older. However, as with use of social

media sites, there is the potential for younger youth to be dishonest about their age in order to participate in competitions promoted by food companies.

The use of incentives as a marketing technique involving consumer rewards for engaging with brand marketing strategies was quite prevalent among the food brands observed and may have promoted happiness among those who received such rewards. Freeman et al. (2014) reported a similar finding in their content analysis of the marketing techniques used by food marketers to promote 27 of the most popular food brands in Australia via social media. They concluded that the majority (88.9%) of brands utilized competitions, prizes and giveaways in their Facebook marketing campaigns.

Providing youth consumers with the opportunity to win prizes by entering competitions offered by food brands could lead to consumers developing strong positive emotional feelings towards marketing campaigns and specific food products. In a study that evaluated potential responses to 27 brands' Facebook pages among 6400 regular Facebook users from the United Kingdom, it was found that 71% of viewers who experienced strong positive emotions in response to food and drink brand page exposure, indicated they preferred those brands (Smith, 2013).

Those consumers who actually won contests offered by food companies made their gratitude and positive feelings towards the companies known via social media. A consumer who won The Quietest Show on Earth Contest posted a comment on the Nature Valley™ Facebook page expressing their thanks towards the food company.

> "love it I lived it ,it was an amazing day to walk around Joshua Tree National Park and get to talk to Andrew Bird .Thanks to Nature Valley and Andrew & Tift for a great performance and opening my eyes on the true beauty of a Nature Parks and the responsibility we all have to preserve these natural beauties of land for future generations to come.." (C-Nature Valley™-F-Aug 26/13).

The marketing technique of offering incentives to consumers was widely used among the food brands sampled and seemed to be a strategy used to get consumers to engage deeper with the food brand by creating user-generated content for example. Consumers' responses to the 'Incentives Offered by Food Company' category were generally positive with many consumers being willing to engage with food brands on a greater level by submitting user-generated content or playing advergames, which were requirements to be entered in food brand competitions.

The theme of Food Brand Targets Emotions demonstrates the unfair marketing techniques used by food brands when marketing to youth. Food brands are aiming to evoke mainly positive emotions among youth when delivering marketing messages, which research findings suggest is an effective technique in increasing the likelihood of a consumer promoting the advertised product (Smith, 2013). Therefore food marketers are getting the outcome they desire (potential viral marketing) by using marketing techniques that impact consumers psychologically, which could be considered an abuse of power in reference to Critical Social Theory.

5.1.3   Eating (or drinking) is a social activity.

The marketing technique of presenting eating as a social activity was demonstrated through the categories "Associating Consumption of Food with Social Cohesion" and "Food Marketing in a School Setting" as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Categories Included in Eating is a Social Activity Theme and Food Companies Which Displayed each Marketing Technique

Categories	Associating Consumption of Food with Social Cohesion	Food Marketing in a School Setting
Food Companies	Coca Cola	Coca Cola
	McDonald's Restaurant	Reese's Peanut Butter Cups
	Oreo	Oreo
	Reese's Peanut Butter Cups	Kellogg's Pop-Tarts
	Monster Energy Drink	Skittles
	Taco Bell Restaurant	
	Kellogg's Pop-Tarts	
	Skittles	
	Nestle Perrier	
	Gatorade	
	Doritos	

5.2.2.1 Associating consumption of food with social cohesion.

Associating Consumption of Food with Social Cohesion was a concept heavily promoted by the Coca Cola™ and Oreo™ brands. However this concept was also demonstrated in marketing campaigns by other food brands, as displayed in Table 5. Marketing campaigns that involved this category typically contained messages encouraging consumers to share the advertised food product with others. Images for this category consisted of characters being depicted together while consuming the food or beverage product. Coca Cola™ in particular tended to display two or more people consuming or obtaining the beverage together in many aspects of the Open Happiness campaign. In a video posted by Coca Cola™ (YouTube, May 29/13) two teenage girls were shown together sitting on a swinging chair. They were each holding a can of Coca Cola™, while looking at each other and smiling.

This finding is similar to that reported by Harris et al. (2014) in a study conducted for the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity in which the marketing activity of sugar-sweetened beverages was examined from January 2013 to June 2014. It was found that Coca Cola™ had Facebook posts which linked to the brand's Twitter site such as the phrase "#ShareACoke". Also the study findings revealed that the Coca-Cola™ YouTube channel displayed videos in a variety of languages, usually showing happy families together.

Consumers did appear to embody the philosophy of food consumption being a social activity, based on the responses collected in the present study. For example, a youth consumer tagged their friend in a post he or she made on the Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ Facebook page and indicated that they wanted to share the food product with their friend during a sleepover,

"(Name) WERE BUYONG THESE AND HAVINF A SLEEPOVER OKAY" (C-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-F- Sept 5/13).

At times consumers provided positive feedback to other consumers regarding comments they had posted in response to content posted by food companies on the social media sites. For example one consumer praised another consumer for their love of Oreo™ cookies.

"You really love oreos!!! (me too) " (C- Oreo™-F-Oct 23/13).

Focus group interviews conducted with students from North East England (ages 13-16 years) revealed that the youth used food brands to form and support their social identity, with certain food brands being considered to be associated with cool people, while healthy eating was deemed unpopular (Stead, McDermott, MacKintosh, & Adamson, 2011). Findings by Robinson, Tobias, Shaw, Freeman, and Higgs (2011) revealed that among female participants (n=122, undergraduate students from the University of Birmingham) who completed a 'Hangman' game with a partner while being offered M&Ms, low self-esteem was significantly associated with an

increased social matching of food intake. The researchers suggested that the study results

provided preliminary evidence of how the desire for social acceptance may promote the social

matching of food consumption in the presence of others. Youth who are exposed to comments

made by other youth that visit and interact on food brand social media sites, may attempt to

mimic the food consumption patterns of their peers in an attempt to gain a popular social identity

and social acceptance amongst peers

In some cases consumers posed questions to other consumers as a way to verify if their

attitudes and behaviours related to food consumption were normal in relation to their peers. A

consumer who posted a comment in response to a video posted by Oreo™ on YouTube on

August 5, 2013, posed a question to other consumers,

> "am i only one that watches these wonderfilled commercials and buys 100 oreos" (C-Oreo™-Y-Aug 5/13).

In a few instances consumers referred to the influence that others had over them eating

the advertised food product. For example some consumers indicated how parents controlled their

consumption of certain food products. A consumer who responded to content posted by Reese's

Peanut Butter Cups™ on Facebook indicated that his or her mother controlled the amount of

Reese's™ products they were permitted to consume.

> "Im addicted to Reese Pieces and Reese Puffs cereal. My mom won't buy me reese anymore unless its a small package" (C-Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™-F-April 10/13).

While food marketers may intend to encourage consumption of advertised products

within a social context, at times social influences such as parents can potentially be a barrier to

youth accessing food products.

5.2.2.2 Food marketing associated with school.

The marketing technique of 'Food Marketing Associated with School' was used among a number of brands (Table 5). Food marketers may have made references to the school setting in their marketing campaigns since youth have the opportunity to interact with their peers in the school setting regarding food products. Food marketers may be aiming to encourage youth to talk about and share food products in the school setting by presenting messages and images which normalize the presence of food brand marketing in the school setting. For example, on Facebook, Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ posed a question to youth consumers:

> "Who wants Pop-Tart as their school mascot? (Note: We're pretty good at doing the splits.) #PopTartsCrazyGood" (FC-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-F-Sept 8/13).

The Oreo™ brand also made reference to the presence of food brands in the school setting and to the sharing of the food brand with peers. In a post made on YouTube, Oreo™ wrote an introduction to a video:

> "Wonder if I gave an Oreo to the people at my high school? Would they keep an optimistic outlook all day? Check out freestyle rap champ, Chiddy Bang, as he works his wonder into our latest Wonderfilled commercial, and visit oreo.com/wonderfilled to download the song." (FC-Oreo™-Y-July 29/13).

Messaging that presents food product consumption as an activity meant to be conducted in a social setting has the potential to influence the eating attitudes and behaviours of youth as they development socially. From the perspective of youth, being included in a social group is very important in this stage of their social development and a belief that consumption of certain food products may be associated with inclusion in a friendship group could prompt them to be regular consumers of those products. Because of the psychosocial stages of youth (Identity versus Identity confusion and Intimacy versus Isolation- Erikson's Psychosocial Theory), youth

may be more receptive to marketing messages that associate food products with social inclusion (Berk, 2009).

Findings by Hemar-Nicolas, Ezan, Gollety, Guichard, and Leroy (2014) indicated that children learn eating practices within a social context, involving emotional and social experiences. Their study involved qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with children (n=20) from France of ages 7-10 years which focused on Bronfenbrenner's microsystem and exosystem, including interactions between the child and family, child and peers and child and teacher, as well as the influence of food advertising. Responses from participants indicated that the development of their eating practices were influenced by the beliefs and practices of their family members such as mothers and grandparents. Also children reported sharing food products with peers and learning about new food products from peers. Comments from children regarding socialization related to eating in the school setting indicated that they learned about healthy eating in this setting from their teachers. The researchers noted that the comments from children regarding advertising reveal that they did not tend to talk to their parents or teachers about advertising but there was some indication they interacted with their peers regarding TV food advertising.

While the present study involved a different demographic than the study conducted by Hemar-Nicolas et al. (2014) (North American youth of approximately 13-24 years of age compared to French children of ages 7-10 years), there are some common threads between study findings. In the present study food advertisers used techniques of promoting eating as a social activity among youth, often presenting messages which urged consumers to share the food products with their peers. Interestingly, findings by Hemar-Nicolas et al. (2014) indicated that younger youth tended to share food products with their peers and engage in interactions with

their peers about food advertising they were exposed to on TV advertising. Further research may be able to determine if there is an association with exposure to food marketing messages which promote sharing of food products among peers and the engaging of these behaviours among youth.

If youth consumers do model the behaviours depicted in social media food marketing that display consumption of food products with others, particularly friends, such behaviours may promote excess caloric consumption. An experimental study by Hetherington, Anderson, Norton, & Newson, (2006) involving British participants (n=37, mean age= 28.3 ± 1.7) who were exposed to varying social conditions during eating episodes, revealed that exposure to friends during eating significantly increased energy intake by 18%, compared to eating alone or among strangers. If consumers engage in the same activities they see in the images present in the social media food marketing campaigns, and consume the food products with a friend(s) this could create a collective effect of group over-consumption. If food companies are aware of this phenomena of increased food intake in the presence of friends, perhaps this is the reason they push advertising messages of consuming food products in groups rather than individually, as a method of encouraging increased consumption among peer groups.

In the present study some youth did integrate advertised food brands into their school activities. For example, one youth consumer indicated that he or she conducted a school project on a food brand, which involved writing an essay and doing a presentation on Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™,

> "@ReesesPBCups Earlier this week, I did an essay on you & presented it. That was fun xX :)" (C-Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™-T-Nov15/13).

It is of great advantage for food marketers to be able to extend their marketing reach into the school setting since youth spend a lot of time in this setting. Consumer responses from the

current study indicate that youth are comfortable incorporating food brands into their school life. In reference to Cultivation theory, youth's frequent exposure to food marketing messages on social media could potentially cultivate their beliefs regarding normal food-related behaviour (Potter, 2014).

5.2.3. Stealth marketing.

Stealth Marketing involved marketing techniques which infiltrated the food brand into the daily lives of youth, making it seem to be something that went hand in hand with certain aspects of life. The theme of stealth marketing included categories involving subtle marketing techniques (Table 6). These marketing techniques involved approaches that were not overt in nature and tended to focus on promoting attributes other than the specific food product. For example, some companies attached their brand image to sports or music, at times utilizing athletes or musicians in their marketing campaigns.

Table 6

Categories Included in Stealth Marketing Theme and Food Companies that Displayed each Marketing Technique

Categories	Food Company Infiltrating Consumers Social Media Profiles	Associating Food Brand with Sports	Food Brand uses Illusions of Grandeur	Food Brand uses Music Artists for Marketing	Subtle Advertising
Food Companies	McDonald's Restaurant Reese's Peanut Butter Cups Kellogg's Pop-Tarts Nestle Perrier Gatorade	Reese's Peanut Butter Cups Oreo Monster Energy Drink Kellogg's Pop-Tarts Gatorade Doritos	Coca Cola McDonald's Restaurant Reese's Peanut Butter Cups Oreo Monster Energy Drink Kellogg's Pop-Tarts Nestle Perrier	Coca Cola Oreo Monster Taco Bell Kellogg's Pop-Tarts Nestle Perrier Nature Valley Doritos	Coca Cola Reese's Peanut Butter Cups Monster Energy Drink Nestle Perrier Doritos

5.2.3.1 Food company infiltrating consumers social media profiles.

The marketing technique of 'Food Company Infiltrating Consumers' Social Media Profiles' involved instances in which marketers found a way to post content on the social media profile sites of certain targeted youth consumers. While this technique was not explicitly promoted by the food companies, it was possible to identify that this technique was being used by the comments made by some youth. Some comments from youth indicated that they were being exposed to marketing on their own social media profile sites against their wishes. Based on the data collected for this study it was possible to identify certain food brands (See Table 6) that used this targeting-type marketing technique. For example, a youth consumer made a comment in response to a post made by McDonald's™ Restaurant on Facebook regarding being targeted by McDonald's™ with unwanted marketing messages:

> "I am not a fan of McDonalds™... I wish this would stop showing up on my page." (C-McDonald's Restaurant™-F-Aug 20/13-Sept 19/13).

Another youth consumer pondered the reason behind the appearance of marketing content on their Facebook newsfeed from Gatorade™.

> "Is everyone here a tennis player? Is this Gatorade™ tennis ad on everyone's page or was it selected for our pages because it knows we like tennis?" [8 likes] (C-Gatorade™-F-Oct 17/13).

This behavioural targeting food marketing technique through social media may prove to have even more negative effects for youth whom are exposed to it, in comparison to television advertising. In this type of food marketing food companies can target their advertising more effectively to the specific youth who they believe will be most receptive to the marketing exposure. Previous research findings indicated that food marketers geographically targeted their television advertisements, which resulted in increased exposure of ads for high calorie and low

nutrient foods among low income and racial minority U. S. youth (based on analysis of designated market area spot television ratings data obtained from Nielsen Media Research) (Powell, Wada, & Kumanyika, 2014). The use of social media in food marketing may allow advertisers to more effectively target low income and racial minority youth since they can gain direct access to their social media profiles such as Facebook which allows companies to post "suggested posts" on targeted individuals' newsfeeds. In reference to Critical Social Theory, the Food Company Infiltrating Consumers Social Media Profiles category demonstrates the blatant power difference between youth and food brands (Ozanne & Murray, 1995). Food brands are capable of buying advertising services from social media companies and then exposing youth to advertising against their will.

5.2.3.2 Associating food brand with sports.

The category of Associating Food Brand with Sports was promoted by a number of food brands (Table 6). The Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ brand presented marketing messages related to college sports, Oreo™ focused on professional sports and Monster Energy Drink™ focused on extreme sports. Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ centred their whole marketing campaign "Let's Go Reese's!" on college sports which allowed for access to college campuses in order to conduct interviews which were videos recorded and uploaded to the food brand's YouTube site. The marketing messages presented by Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ also aimed to connect the consumption of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ with either participation in college sports or spectatorship of college sports games. Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ posted a message on Facebook stating the following:

> "Are you a fan of college sports and REESE'S Peanut Butter Cups? Check out the perfect mix of both at Let's Go REESE'S!" (FC-Reese's Peanut Butter Cups-F-Feb 19/13).

Gatorade™ presented the connection between sports and the Gatorade™ product in a slightly different manner than Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™. Gatorade™ tended to post messages regarding competitiveness in relation to training and competing in sports. For example, Gatorade™ posted a message on Twitter which read:

> "The only thing harder than training is losing. #WinFromWithin" (FC-Gatorade™-T-Nov 25/13).

Food companies that utilized an association with sports in their marketing campaigns also posted images or videos on their social media sites that displayed characters wearing or using sports equipment that were decorated with the food brand logos. For example, the Monster Energy Drink™ brand logo is a green coloured letter "M". This green "M" logo was displayed on the helmets, clothing and bikes of motor-cross bike riders featured in pictures and videos posted on the Monster Energy Drink™ social media sites. A video posted on YouTube on October 23/2013 by Monster Energy Drink™ depicted a motor-cross bike rider driving a bike. The bike and rider were suspended in the air with the bike positioned vertically. The green 'M' Monster Energy Drink™ logo was displayed in three spots on the bike and on the side of the rider's helmet.

Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ also posted an image on their Twitter site that displayed the food brand logo on a sports helmet. This Twitter post, which was posted on October 17/13 depicted a brown silhouette of a football helmet against an orange background. The helmet was plastered with multiple images of the Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ logo. Above the helmet in yellow font the words "Reward the Perfect Play." were depicted. Below the helmet was the "Let's Go Reese's" marketing campaign logo.

Food brands seemed to be promoting messages to youth that certain lifestyles naturally involve consumption of the advertised food products, such as motor-cross bike riding and

consumption of Monster Energy Drink™. Using such marketing approaches with products such as energy drinks that contain caffeine, targeted towards youth is problematic considering that energy drink consumption among youth has been identified as a public health concern due to the high sugar and caffeine content of these products (Pomeranz, Munsell, & Harris, 2013).

Recent study findings indicated that among Canadian youth (grades 7, 9, 10 and 12) sampled, 62% consumed energy drinks (Azagba, Langille, & Asbridge, 2014). Study findings reported by Azagba et al. also indicated that higher consumption of energy drinks was associated with sensation seeking or risky behaviours, depression and substance use. Interestingly, sensation seeking and substance use, are two attributes that tend to define the motor-cross lifestyle to which Monster Energy™ prominently attached their sponsorship. Monster Energy™ also included video interviews and pictures of sponsored motor-cross athletes in their social media marketing campaign for the Monster Energy Cup 2013. The use of athlete endorsements by food companies to market high-sugar drinks has been noted previously in the research literature as a prominent marketing technique for use with an adolescent audience (Bragg, Yanamadala, Roberto, Harris, & Brownell, 2014). Bragg et al. found that among 512 brands (sampled in 2010) that were endorsed by 100 different athletes, food and beverages were the second highest (23.8%) product category that utilized athlete endorsement. Among the food or beverage products that were found to carry athlete endorsements, 79% were classified as low nutrient quality and the adolescent age group (aged 12 to 17 years) experienced the highest level of exposure compared to adults and children (Bragg et al., 2014).

In the present study youth did display their acceptance and endorsement of associating food products with sports through their responses to content posted by food brands on social media sites. For example, a consumer who responded to content posted on Facebook by the

Monster Energy™ Drink brand indicated that they wished to decorate their motorbike with the Monster Energy™ logo.

> "Can i put monster energy sticker on my motorbike and the name of monster energy? because i a big monster fan !" (C-Monster Energy™-F-Oct 11/13).

While many consumers bought into the food company presented connection between less healthy food products such as candy or energy beverages and sports, others commented on the incongruent match between the two concepts. Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ posted a post on Facebook that included a written message.

> "At Duke, the road to the Final Four might actually start in the kitchen. REESE'S visits Catering Manager Sam Lingle inside Scharf Hall to find out what fuels championships. Find more game day videos and fun at Let's Go REESE'S: http://reeses.me/XsYyG0" (FC-Reese's Peanut Butter Cup's™-F-April 10/13).

and a picture of an interviewer in a kitchen with a chef who mixed up trail mix which included Reese's Puff cereal and Reese's Pieces candy. In response to this post made by Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ a youth consumer questioned the appropriateness of the sugary trail mix for athletes such as college football players.

> "They are making this for the football team? This would never happen at my school they aren't even allowed to drink soda at dinner" (C-Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™-F-April 10/13).

Among the food brands sampled that used the 'Associating Food Brand with Sports' marketing technique, none besides Gatorade™ were products that would contribute in a healthful manner to an athlete's diet. The Gatorade™ product could function as a beverage to replenish electrolytes for individuals engaging in high levels of physical activity, but if used by consumers who are not very active, this sugar-sweetened beverage could add significant calories to the overall daily intake.

5.2.3.3 Food brand uses illusions of grandeur.

The category of 'Food Brand uses Illusions of Grandeur' involved food brands presenting their food products in ways that could present the product as higher quality than it really is, such as presenting the product in the same manner as would be seen for a gourmet product or referring to consumers as fans, rather than consumers. Pictures and videos depicted food or beverage products being served as though the products were of gourmet quality. In a YouTube video posted by Coca Cola™ a female youth was shown sitting at a table which was decorated with a red and white checkered table cloth and multiple plate settings. She lifted a silver platter cover off of a red platter, revealing two bottles of Coca Cola™ and two glasses.

Most comments made by consumers who responded to the video posted by Coca Cola™ that was called "Coca Cola Happiness Table" (video described above) referred to the "feel-good" vibe Coca Cola™ portrayed in their video. None of the youth consumers specifically referred to food products being presented in a manner that would normally be associated with gourmet cuisine. However one consumer who responded to the Coca Cola Happiness Table video did comment on how fake the presentation of the commercial was.

> "i'm surprised anybody could eat anything its so sickeningly contrived." (C-Coca Cola™-Y-Nov 2/13).

Food brands sometimes referred to consumers as fans, as if food products were celebrities which were so famous they gained popularity among fans rather than consumers. In a post produced by Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™ in response to a consumer's post, consumers were collectively referred to as "fans".

> "We hear you, (Name)! Thanks for letting us know they were a fan favorite, and we'll certainly make note of your request for the return of this perfect combination!" (C-Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™-F-Sept 13/13).

In the current study some youth consumers also referred to themselves as fans of the food products. For instance one consumer indicated that while they were not a fan of sports, which was the primary focus of the marketing messages presented by Resse's Peanut Butter Cups™, they were a huge fan of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™.

> "No Where Not Big Fan of Football But Big Big Fan Of Reeses." (C-Reese's Peanut Butter Cups™-F-Aug 31/13).

The 'Food Brand Uses Illusions of Grandeur' technique involved food brands trying to depict their products in a way that gave the illusion that the products possessed certain qualities such as being healthy or part of a healthy lifestyle, as being really popular and having "fans" and as being part of a gourmet meal. Consumers did not post comments about the fact that food brands were attempting to "fancy up their products" which could mean that it was not a very noticeable technique to consumers or that this smaller level of deception was not an issue consumers felt the need to protest, compared to other issues such as ethical business practices or use of GMOs.

5.2.3.4 Food brand uses music artists for marketing.

Each brand that used this marketing technique, 'Food Brand uses Music Artists for Marketing', utilized music artists in their marketing campaigns to a different degree. Taco Bell™ and Nature Valley™ created entire marketing campaigns related to music artists. Monster Energy™ used one music artist as part of their Monster Cup 2013 event, however this technique received mixed reviews from the consumers, as some did not view the race of the music artist to be part of the "motor-cross lifestyle." The Oreo™ food brand utilized music artists in their Wonderfilled campaign in a unique manner compared to the other food brands. Oreo™ recruited artists to sing songs about Oreo™ cookies as opposed to using a song already created by the artist for the food product commercial. Artists from music genres including Country, Rap, Pop

and Rock sang the "Oreo™ Wonderfilled Song" in Oreo™ videos posted on YouTube. Oreo ™

posted the following introduction to a video which was posted on YouTube:

> "Owl City sings the new OREO Wonderfilled song in our newest television commercial. Join us as we wonder if, by downloading it for free now at http://OreoWonderfilled.ca" (FC-Oreo™-Y-May 28/13).

Consumers seemed receptive to the use of music artists in food brand marketing. One

consumer in particular had high praise for the marketing campaign promoted by Taco Bell™

Restaurant, referred to as Feed the Beat which involved Taco Bell™ providing food to touring

Indie genre music artists.

> "Amazing. It's just amazing how this program has given these artists the chance to emerge from the shadows of the Internet into live shows with large crowds. Amazing. [2 likes]" (C-Taco Bell™ Restaurant-F-Aug 26/13).

Although, some consumers opposed a specific rapper (Meek Mill) being part of the

marketing campaign for the Monster Energy Cup 2013 event, they seemed to be voicing their

complaint against the music artist on the basis of race, but did not dispute the place of music in

general as being an appropriate marketing tool for the Monster Energy drink brand.

> "a black guy at a xcross event?" [2 likes] (C-Monster Energy™-F-Oct 30/13)

Although two consumers agreed with the racist comment made by the consumer

responding to the picture of rapper Meek Mill posted on the Monster Energy™ Facebook site (so

much so that they publicly shared their agreement with 'likes'), another consumer defended the

music artist.

> "Meek Milly the only rapper out here that shows love for our sport #respect" (C-Monster Energy™-F-Oct 30/13).

Music is an important part of North American youth culture which food companies have

capitalized on by incorporating the use of music and music artists into their marketing

campaigns. When food companies pull musicians into their marketing campaign they are in

effect entering a partnership with those music artists. The food brand hopes to gain popularity from using the musician in their campaign and the musician may hope to gain popularity (or money) from being associated with the brand. Music celebrity Beyoncé Knowles gained both popularity and money when she became a brand ambassador with Pepsi™ in 2012 (Wartman, 2012). The beverage company committed 50 million dollars in their campaign with Beyoncé (Bittman, 2013). Beyoncé was criticized for being contradictory in her actions since she is promoting a beverage that has been linked to obesity and health problems, when she previously took part in Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign which aimed to address childhood obesity (Wartman, 2012).

Narayan (2013) deconstructed the potential reasoning beyond why Beyoncé accepted a collaborative deal with Pepsi™ and revealed that Pepsi had been instrumental in helping Beyoncé achieve stardom earlier in her career from her involvement in commercials. Narayan also suggested that the social climate in which obesity is perceived as mainly an issue at the individual level, rather than at the social environmental level, could be part of the reasoning by which Beyoncé diffused her responsibility of having a negative impact on childhood obesity in North America. As music artists continue to take on the role of brand ambassadors of food and beverage brands it is important to consider how vital these brands can be in propelling a musician into fame (and fortune) and how music artists' personal beliefs about the causes of obesity can impact their willingness to be associated with food or beverage brands. Since music artists can be big role models to youth, it may be an important public health strategy to direct some forms of educational messaging regarding obesity, towards celebrities, so that they have greater knowledge as to how their associations with food brands can have an important role in childhood obesity in North America.

5.2.3.5 Subtle advertising.

The 'Subtle Advertising' marketing technique involved the subtle display of colours or background images that closely resembled the product labelling, in pictures or videos for posted marketing campaign content. The Perrier's Secret Place marketing campaign created by Nestle Perrier™ involved the release of an advergame in which the object of the game was to identify hidden bottles of Nestle Perrier™ throughout the duration of the game. YouTube videos promoting the Perrier's Secret Place advergame displayed fleeting images of Nestle Perrier™ bottles in corners of scenes and almost every scene contained green coloring (same color on the beverage label) either on characters or in the background. In one video posted by Nestle Perrier™ on YouTube on April 2/13, a girl was shown fighting in a boxing ring. The girl was very lean and wearing a yellow shirt that bared her mid-section with matching yellow shorts. There was an older man behind the girl, outside of the ring, who had a white towel draped around his neck. Part of another man was seen in the screenshot inside the ring with the girl who was presumably the referee of the fight. A table was depicted in the background of the fighting ring, with a silver coloured lamp displayed on the table. A green Nestle Perrier™ bottle was shown on the table in front of the lamp.

Such subtle approaches to marketing draw on the principles of neuro-marketing that are innovative approaches in the field of marketing. Research evidence does suggest that in some cases youth may not perceive their exposure to food marketing. Kumar et al. (2014) reported that a weighted sample of U.S adolescents (ages 12-17 yrs, n=847) reported less exposure to food marketing than the level of exposure reported by their parents. The researchers suggested that this finding could indicate that adolescents may not be fully cognizant of all food advertising exposure incidents. Another potential explanation for this discrepancy between the adolescent

participants reported level of exposure compared to the level of exposure their parents had perceived their children were exposed to, is the third person effect. The theorized third person effect posits that people tend to assume that others are affected more so than themselves to exposure to persuasive media communications (Davison, 1983). In the case of the study by Kumar et al. (2014) the third person effect could be two-fold in which the parents perceive that their sons or daughters are exposed to food advertisements more than themselves, while the adolescents may believe that their exposure to food advertisements is less than that of their peers.

Although many consumers in the present study appeared to accept subtle marketing messages, based on their lack of commenting on such techniques, a small few did take note of the subtle nature of some marketing approaches used by food brands. For example one consumer who responded to content posted by Coca Cola™ on YouTube suggested that the marketing approach used by Coca Cola™ in a video posted to YouTube possessed a subliminal undertone.

> "No shit eh, I feel like nobody understands the subliminal under tone of this, Put a happy friendly song and show some nice clips and suddenly people think having cameras set up everywhere so that we are always being watched is a good thing." (C-Coca Cola™-Y-Oct 31/13).

Subtle marketing techniques are insidious in nature, perhaps working to make social media food marketing an everyday backdrop of youth's social environment. Such marketing techniques are inherently unfair because they reinforce power disparities between food marketers and youth. Subtle Marketing likely is intended to be perceived at the subconscious level, but still could potentially increase youths' preferences towards food brands, similar to study findings reported by Yoo (2008) in which consumers who had unconsciously processed web advertisements were more likely to select the advertised brands compared to consumers who were not exposed to the web advertisements.

5.2.4   Food product associated with cool lifestyle.

The 'Food Product Associated with Cool Lifestyle' theme involved a collection of marketing techniques which may be perceived as 'cool' by youth. These marketing techniques included depictions of actions that youth may consider rebellious and exclusive 'club-like' benefits attached to the food brands, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Categories Included in Food Product Associated with Cool Lifestyle Theme and Food Companies that Displayed each Marketing Technique

Categories	Women as Sex Objects- Men as Consumers	Food Product Marketed Like Alcohol Product	Food Product is used as Currency	Language related to Cool Lifestyle	Underage Consumer	Exclusive Product
Food Companies	Monster Energy Drink Nestle Perrier Doritos	Coca Cola Oreo Kellogg's Pop-Tarts Reese's Peanut Butter Cups Monster Energy Drink Taco Bell Restaurant Nestle Perrier Doritos	Coca Cola Oreo Kellogg's Pop-Tarts Doritos	Oreo Monster Energy Drink Taco Bell Restaurant Gatorade Doritos	Gatorade Skittles Doritos	Taco Bell Restaurant Nestle Perrier

5.2.4.1 Women as sex objects-men as consumers.

Food brands which portrayed this marketing message, 'Women as Sex Objects-Men as Consumers', frequently depicted women in a sexual manner by showing them dressed in tight-fitting attire that revealed their cleavage. Monster Energy Drink™ tended to portray any females in their marketing campaign images or videos in a sexual manner. On October 19/13, Monster Energy Drink™ posted an image on Twitter that displayed four young women standing in a row, each wearing tight black pants and a small black top that bared their midriff and cleavage. The girls had the Monster Energy™ logo (green 'M') adorned on their pants and shirts. Part of the shirt formed a collar around their necks and also contained the Monster Energy Drink™ logo. The girls were shown smiling while they held the Monster Energy™ beverage.

Nestle Perrier™ also displayed sexualized images of women in their advergame "Perrier's Secret Place." A consumer who posted a response to the Perrier's Secret Place marketing campaign content on Facebook identified this marketing technique in a critical manner.

> "For goodness sake... women as sex objects... men as consumers? Is this the 1970s?" (C-Nestle Perrier™-F-April 2/13).

The manner in which some food companies portrayed women in their marketing campaign images is in line with findings reported by Collins (2011) who conducted a quantitative content analysis of articles regarding gender roles portrayed in media from two special issues from the journal Sex Roles (issued in 2010 and 2011). Results from Collins' content analysis revealed that women were underrepresented across various forms of media and when represented were portrayed in a sexualized manner such as wearing revealing clothing or having their bodies exposed (nudity). In the Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization

of Girls (2010) research evidence of negative effects of exposure to the sexualization of girls and women were discussed including negative impacts on cognitive and physical functioning, body dissatisfaction and appearance anxiety, mental health, physical health, sexuality and attitudes and beliefs. Food advertisements that portray women in a hypersexualized manner could be contributing negatively to the health of youth in more ways than just influencing eating behaviours since previous research findings suggest a widespread negative effect of sexualization exposure among both females and males.

Recently the Budweiser™ beer company received back lash from consumers regarding a product logo that was viewed as promoting rape culture, resulting in Budweiser™ revoking the offending slogan to appease angry consumers (Guerra, 2015). As part of the alcohol company's launch of their #UpforWhatever campaign the message "the perfect beer for removing 'no' from your vocabulary from the night" was displayed on Bud Light™ beer bottle labels. Consumers used social media such as Twitter to discuss the marketing message at length with many perceiving the message to glorify lack of consent during sexual relations, thereby contributing to rape culture. All of the controversy around the message caused Budweiser™ to remove the message from their campaign and to issue a public apology. This proceeding demonstrates the potential power and influence that consumers can have in their relations with food or beverage companies, since enough pressure from consumers has in this case been effective in promoting changes to a beverage company's marketing campaign.

Despite the resistance of some consumers to being exposed to advertising images and messages which portray women in an objectifying manner, these advertisements are nestled within a misogynistic North American culture in which the sexual exploitation of women has been normalized (Berberick, 2010). This normalization of the sexual objectification of women in

the media has possibly changed the attitudes of young women over time so that they have become more accepting of advertisements which portray women in a sexually exploitive manner (Zimmerman, & Dahlberg, 2011). Zimmerman and Dahlberg conducted a survey with young undergraduate women (n=94) that repeated components of two studies done in 1991 which aimed to measure women's attitudes and purchase intentions towards brands that used advertising which sexually objectified women. Findings of the study revealed that the young women's attitudes were significantly different than the participants who completed the studies in 1991, with the participants of Zimmerman and Dahlberg's study being more accepting and less offended by advertising that objectified women. One of the premises of Cultivation theory is that media can influence long term acculturation, therefore if food brands continue to present messages that portray women in a passive, sexually exploitive manner. This could negatively impact the attitudes of youth towards the roles of women (Potter, 2014).

5.2.4.2. *Food product marketed like alcohol product.*

This category of 'Food Product Marketed like Alcohol Product' involved the food or beverage brand depicting their products in a similar fashion as one would expect with alcohol products or in some cases presenting the product as if it produced a high after being consumed. For example, an image posted by Nestle Perrier™ on Facebook on March 15/13 depicted the Nestle Perrier™ beverage being stocked in a bar in place of alcohol. A young male adult was standing behind the bar and the wall behind him was black and contained a large mirror and shelving. The shelves were filled with bottles of Nestle Perrier™ and empty glasses with 'Perrier' written on them. On the bar there were two bottles of Nestle Perrier™, lemons and limes and glasses filled with a liquid which contained a straw and sliced lemon on the rim of the

glass. The bartender was holding a bottle of Nestle Perrier™ in one hand and tossed a lemon and lime into the air with the other hand.

A video posted by Doritos™ on YouTube on March 15/13 displayed Doritos™ chips providing the removal of inhibition normally associated with alcohol or drugs. In the video a valet was depicted consuming Doritos™, which seemed to give him a high causing him to take an expensive silver convertible car on a joy ride, picking up a police officer and a man dressed in a banana suit during the ride. In between scenes was the image of a certain number of Doritos™ lined up in a row with a black background. Across the lined-up Doritos™ the words "3 Doritos later" was written (later in the video "5 Doritos later" was written).

Winpenny, Marteau, and Nolte (2014) examined the exposure of children and adolescents primarily from the United Kingdom, to alcohol marketing on social media. Their findings indicated that Facebook was the social media site with the highest reach among UK youth ages 15-24 years old and that Twitter and YouTube pages among the five alcohol brands examined were accessible to youth of all ages.

In the present study, some consumers accepted the notion of beverage or food products being marketed in the same manner as alcohol products, with some youth even playing along in pretending food or beverage products induced a state of euphoric drunkenness.

"I want to go. If not for the party just to get shitfaced on perrier on tap!" (C-Nestle Perrier™-Y- April 2/13).

Food marketers presenting food or beverage products in a similar fashion as addictive substances such as drugs or alcohol may be planting the seed among consumers to foster beliefs that they are addicted to certain advertised products. Some consumers indicated that they had an addiction to the advertised food products as evidenced by their urgency in obtaining or

consuming the products. In response to content posted by Nestle Perrier™ on Facebook, a consumer proclaimed their excitement regarding the Nestle Perrier™ product,

"I can't wait !!! For my Perrier addiction !! [4 likes]" (C-Nestle Perrier™-F-Mar 18/13).

A study by Auger et al. (2015) which involved a sample (n=397) of Canadian high school aged (grades 7-11) youth revealed the presence of inadvertent promotion of illicit drugs through a sports corporation marketing campaign. The study involved exposing students to an advertisement called "Light it up" which was intended to promote sports or a neutral comparison advertisement. Results from the cluster randomized control trial revealed that 22.9% of student who observed the Light it up advertisement perceived the presence of illicit drug messages, compared to 1.0% of students who were exposed to the neutral advertisement reporting the presence of illicit drug messages. Findings of the study by Auger and colleges are similar to the findings of the present study, since in the present study food marketers did not use any verbal or written messages which explicitly mentioned alcohol or drugs or displayed images of alcohol or drugs, yet multiple consumers perceived that the food brands were making an association between the product and alcohol or drugs. For example, a number of consumers perceived that there were messages related to drugs or alcohol in a video posted by Doritos™ on YouTube on March 15/13.

"They got high on Doritos. Lol" (C-Doritos™-Y-Mar 15/13).

"Love this commercial, its so random and got awesome music. for some reason i keep thinking of the hangover when i see this." (C-Doritos™-Y-Mar 15/13).

"So Doritos are made of Bath Salts now?" (C-Doritos™-Y-Mar 15/13).

"Doritos are one hell of a drug." (C-Doritos™-Y-Mar 15/13).

"This is basically a PSA about how Doritos are the crack cocaine of food." (C-Doritos™-Y-Mar 15/13).

Despite the passive acceptance of some consumers, of marketing messages which likened food products to potentially addictive substances, other consumers responded to such messages in a critical manner. For instance one consumer who made a comment in response to a video posted by Doritos™ on YouTube, asserted that likening food products to alcohol products was stupid.

"So apparently eating doritos will have the same effect on you as alcohol or drugs. Commercials are stupid." (C-Doritos™-Y-Mar 15/13).

Also a consumer who observed a video posted by Nestle Perrier™ on YouTube, took issue with the concept of marketing Perrier™ like an alcoholic beverage.

"its a lame marketing scheme that is trying to be provocative and capturing peoples attention, but it's not beer. its water. so please stick to what you know by scamming people with over priced water" (C-Nestle Perrier™-Y-April 2/13).

Although some consumers commented critically on social media food marketing that portrayed food products as addictive substances, it is important to note the cultural background in which this type of marketing technique is presented. For example, a Canadian study involving a survey of 45 425 youth (grades 7-12), conducted in 2008-2009 revealed that current use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs among Canadian youth was common, with 50.8% of grade 12 students reporting that they engaged in binge drinking and 29.1% reporting that they used Marijuana (Leatherdale, & Burkhalter, 2012). Since many youth are users of addictive substances, particularly alcohol, exposure to food marketing that depicts products similar to alcohol products would likely be appealing to youth, especially given the forbidden nature of such a presentation directed at youth.

5.2.4.3 Food product is used as currency.

This technique of 'Food Product Used as Currency' involved characters using the food or beverage product to yield some sort of benefit. For example, Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ noted benefits of exchanging pop-tarts with other students and teachers at school.

> "Pop-Tarts: the hottest commodity on the cafeteria trades market. #PopTartsCrazyGood" (FC- Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-T-Sept 25/13).

In the current study consumers did recognize that food marketers were attempting to link possession of food products with benefits. One consumer who posted a response to content posted by Skittles™ on YouTube posed a question to Skittles™ in order to verify their understanding of the marketing messaging.

> "Sooo, what you're saying is, if I don't smile for a long while, then put skittles in my mouth when the girl I like is coming over to me, she'll kiss me?" (C-Skittles™-Y-Oct 31/13).

This marketing technique in which marketing messages depict characters exchanging a food or beverage product in exchange for a benefit may be marketers attempt to associate products with having added value beyond taste or satiation. For example, marketers may wish to create the impression that food brands are like a "golden ticket" which can allow then access to a cool lifestyle.

5.2.4.4 Language related to cool lifestyle.

The marketing technique of 'Language Related to Cool Lifestyle' involved food brands using attributes in their marketing campaign that would likely appeal to youth consumers. Such techniques presumably resonated with youth consumers in such a way that they felt comfortable posting comments on the food brand social media sites using language which was indicative of a "cool youth-type lifestyle", including profanity and slang terms. For example, in a video posted by Monster Energy™ on YouTube on September 11/13, motocross riders who were interviewed

spoke a number of curse words, some of which were bleeped out, while others were left as spoken by the interviewee. Profanity and slang words were used excessively in consumer comments posted on the Monster Energy Drink™ social media sites.

"fuck man this is gonna be to sick" (C-Monster Energy Drink™-Y- Sept 11/13).

The comments of youth consumers in response to marketing campaigns which used slang terms and profanity to signify a cool lifestyle were consistent with findings reported by Anderson, and Brown McGabe (2012) based on their study of the socialization of adolescents on the Internet. The researchers reviewed metaphors created by 149 eighth graders which involved the youth describing their relationship with computers. A second data collection component involved conducting focus group interviews with 97 participants (ages 19-23 years old) to ask questions regarding participants on and off line identities. Results of the study revealed that many adolescents indicated that they acted more rebellious and independent when talking to strangers online and also admitted to swearing at each other. Also participants described use of aggressive language in conversations that took place on the Internet that was deemed "common ground online", which at times was carried over into offline contexts.

Consumers' responses to exposure to the 'Language Related to Cool Lifestyle' marketing technique were to mirror the techniques that they observed such as using profanity and slang terms. Using language that may be frowned upon by older adults or in school settings may be appealing to youth who could view rebellion as a way to try to fit in with peer groups. Social media has gained youth even more opportunity to engage in rebellious acts with the recent emergence of social media challenges that are shared virally among youths' social networks. There has been a recent trend for youth to participate in often dangerous "challenges" on social media such as setting themselves on fire, burning their skin with an ice and salt combination, choking themselves to obtain a high and swallowing dry cinnamon (Kimmel, 2014). Senior

counselor and supervisor Barry Sloane of Teenline a resource program and 24-hour hotline at Holy Spirit Hospital's Behavioral Health Center, suggests that teens who engage in these risky social media challenges are aiming to test boundaries and because they think it will make them look cool amongst peers (Kimmel, 2014). Food companies such as Monster Energy™ that attach their sponsorship to thrill-seeking activities such as motor-cross events are capitalizing on the risk-taking propensity of their targeted youth audience.

5.2.4.5 Underage consumer.

Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are restricted in use for individuals under the age of 13 years. Some food brands such as Gatorade™, Skittles™ and Doritos™ attracted consumers that were under the age of 13 years, which was discovered by reading posts in which consumers declared their age. In the context of a conversation among consumers in response to a video posted on YouTube by Skittles™, a youth respondent indicated that they were eight years of age, which is much younger than the 13 year old minimum age limit that is required for the use of YouTube.

> "This is a skit so why be all mad over that. I am 8 and I know that." (C-Skittles™-Y-Oct 31/13).

Winpenny et al. (2014) also found that children below the restricted age (13 years and under) with 39% of boys and 48% of girls of ages 6-14 years from the United Kingdom accessing Facebook during December 2010 to May 2011 (based on data regarding online audiences that was obtained from the media and analytics company Ebiquity). The thrill of younger youth being able to access content they perceive to be restricted to older youth and adults may prompt them to lie about their ages, resulting in them being exposed to advertising for food and alcohol products.

5.2.4.6 Exclusive product.

The marketing technique of 'Exclusive Product' was used by Taco Bell™ and Nestle

Perrier™. This approach involved the food brands offering unique food and beverage products or

using music in advertisements which was produced specifically for their marketing campaigns.

In a video posted on YouTube by Taco Bell™ Restaurant, the band New Politics was shown

taste testing food and beverage products at the Taco Bell™ headquarters after they provided a

music performance. The voiceover on the video explained what products they were being

presented with, and made a point of emphasizing certain products which were only offered

through Taco Bell™.

> "We have the Mountain Dew Baja Blast. It's made out of a flavour that only we carry,
> that Mountain Dew developed for us, exclusive to Taco Bell." (FC-Taco Bell™
> Restaurant-Y-Oct 8/13).

The use of marketing techniques which involve 'Associating Food Products with a Cool

Lifestyle' prey on youth's developmentally driven desire to achieve optimal social status with

their peer groups. Exposure to these marketing messages may prompt youth to develop the belief

that they can appear 'cooler' to their peers by consuming the advertised food products, in effect

buying their way into a perceived higher social hierarchy of popularity among their peers.

Interestingly, some companies appear to even promote the low-paying jobs available at their

establishments as cool and an opportunity to hang out with friends (Besen-Cassino, 2013).

Besen-Cassino found that working for well-known chains such as coffee shops was appealing to

youth because of the social distinction it provided in helping to shape their identities as being

associated with cool brands.

This marketing message theme relates to the Media Dependency Theory in which youth

consumers may be dependent on media such as social media to determine which behaviours are

appropriate in gaining them acceptance among their peers (Ball-Rokeach, & DeFleur, 1976). In

the case of social media food marketing, youth are being inundated with messages which tell

them to buy certain beverage and food products to make them look 'cool' amongst peers.

5.2.5   Health appeal.

The 'Health Appeal' theme was displayed among food companies which paired food

product images with concepts that may be considered as healthy as displayed in Table 8.

Table 8

*Categories Included in Health Appeal Theme and Food Companies Which Displayed each
Marketing Technique*

Categories	Associating Product with Outdoor Activity	Getting Back to Nature	Depiction of Healthy Food
Food Categories	Coca Cola Nature Valley Doritos Gatorade Lundberg Family Farms	Nature Valley	Coca Cola

5.2.5.1 Associating product with outdoor activity.

The marketing technique of 'Associating Product with Outdoor Activity' involved food

brands posting images which depicted characters engaging in outdoor activities. For example

Doritos™ posted an image on Facebook on June 28/13 that displayed a young male jumping off

of a wooden dock, with a clear blue sky and a brilliant blue body of water below him. His beige

swimming trunks were wet, denoting that he had already been in the water, and his arms were

stretched out above his head as his body was suspended in the air.

Typically portrayals of outdoor activity depicted in images presented by food brands portrayed characters not only in an outdoor environment but also engaging in physical activity. For example in the image posted by Doritos™ on Facebook on June 28/13, while the male youth was shown outside, he was also engaging in physical activity by jumping in a natural body of water and presumably swimming around after each jump. Researchers, Folta, Goldberg, Economos, Bell and Meltzer (2006), reported observing a higher occurrence of physical activity depictions in food advertisements during children's television programming compared to advertisements for games or toys. A chi-squared analysis of the advertisements presented in the U.S. children's television (ages 6-12 years of age), sampled in 2003, also revealed that food advertisements were more likely to be significantly associated with characters having greater athletic ability compared to advertisements for games and toys. The researchers suggested that the increased use of depictions of physical activity in food advertisements may be a tactic used by food marketers as a way to deflect the focus of food products being associated with childhood obesity.

Interestingly, some youth in the present study seemed to be aware of the actual use of certain food products versus the use by active individuals which some food companies attempted to portray in their marketing messages and images. A consumer who posted a response to content posted by Gatorade™ on Facebook commented on the shift of the typical profile of a Gatorade™ consumer in the 1960s compared to 2013. The picture the consumer commented on was of two close-up pictures of the Gatorade™ product juxtaposed side by side. One photo was of Gatorade™ from 1969 and the other was a bottle of Gatorade™ from 2013. The bottle of Gatorade™ from 1969 was made of glass and had the words "for active people" written on the label. Some consumers found the suggestion that Gatorade™ used to be intended for active

people to be comical, since in 2013 its consumption was not known to be exclusive to active

people,

> "Gatorade was for active people back than ha not any more" (C-Gatorade™-F-Oct
> 22/13).

Some food brands may be trying to implement marketing techniques that depict

characters engaging in physical activity in an outdoor setting as a way to demonstrate how their

products fit into a healthy lifestyle. For example Coca Cola™ Canada partnered with

ParticiACTION a Canadian initiative that aims to promote physical activity among adolescents

across Canada (Booth, 2013). As ParticipACTION's largest private sector sponsor, Coca Cola™

donated five million dollars in 2008 over the period of a five year contract, followed by an

additional five year contract signed in 2012 which also provided five million dollars over five

years (Booth, 2013). Some of the food brands sampled in the present study such as Doritos™

and Coca Cola™ may be including images of physical activity in their marketing campaigns as a

way to pacify critics that place blame on high fat foods and sugar-sweetened beverages as

contributors to the obesity issue among youth.

5.2.5.2 Getting back to nature.

The marketing technique of 'Getting Back to Nature' was used by the Nature Valley™

food brand. It involved images being posted on Facebook and Twitter which were photographs

of nature scenes. However these nature scenes did not contain any images of Nature Valley™

products. Most pictures posted by Nature Valley™ for The Quietest Show on Earth marketing

campaign displayed pictures solely of nature scenes, devoid of people or nature scenes

interjected with a sprinkling of hikers. For example, a picture posted by Nature Valley™ on

Facebook on August 26/13 displayed two individuals sitting together in the shade of a large tree.

Surrounding the vast tree was an open grassy field, with treed mountains and a clear blue sky in the background.

Only a handful of consumers commented on the marketing campaign presented by Nature Valley™ which heavily utilized images of nature scenes, while other marketing techniques such as associating the food brand with happiness and social cohesion used heavily by brands such as Coca Cola™ and Oreo™ garnered hundreds of consumer responses. A few consumers did comment on their desire to be in the scenes depicted in the pictures posted by Nature Valley™ on Facebook.

"Beautiful!! Would love to be there." (C-Nature Valley™-F-Aug 26/13).
However, some consumers voiced their displeasure with Nature Valley™, particularly regarding the use of GMOs in its food products.

"Take out the gmo's" (C-Nature Valley™-F-Aug 26/13).
This disjointed and sparse collective response from consumers could be due to their lack of ability to relate to nature. For instance Louv (2009) suggests that youth are disconnected from nature due to the influence of their social environment (school and home environment) which has gradually led to reduced opportunities to engage in nature and a subsequent reduction in the perceived importance of youth being exposed to nature. Mainella, Agate, and Clark (2011) suggested that increased access to electronic media in the home setting has displaced the role of natural settings in youth's play. Youth's disconnection with nature can have health consequences including developmental issues with focus and learning, as well as negative physical health outcomes as sedentary play with electronics replaces outdoor play (Louv, 2009; Mainella et al., 2011). Therefore food marketers' attempts to incorporate themes of nature in their marketing campaigns could potentially contribute to youths' health in a positive way, although the food products they promote to youth should also be health contributing. The food brand Kashi™ (not

sampled in the current study) has implemented a marketing campaign that aims to reconnect

consumers with nature and the source their food (Kashi Company, 2015). The campaign is called

the Plant it Forward Initiative and involves a partnership with the Evergreen's Seeding Healthy

Communities which aims to build and support urban gardens across Canada. As part of the Plant

it Forward Initiative marketing campaign, Kashi™ is providing free packets of seeds attached

directly to food product packaging, so that consumers can grow some of their own food.

5.2.5.3 Depiction of healthy food.

The marketing technique of 'Depiction of Healthy Food' was used by Coca Cola™ in

which depictions of foods which would be considered healthy such as vegetables were placed in

scenes of commercials. For example, in a YouTube video posted by Coca Cola™ on November

2/13, close-up shots of wholesome foods such as various leafy greens and chicken displayed

throughout an Italian marketplace were captured. These images of pure, natural foods were

juxtaposed against a food truck decorated with the red and white colouring of the Coca Cola™

logo. This Coca Cola™ truck drove through the streets of a quaint Italian town, finally arriving

at its destination in which it parked in an open space and a chef cooked a gourmet meal, which

was presented to members of the public who happened to pass by the Coca Cola™ truck. The

beverage that was served with the freshly prepared gourmet meal was none other than the Coca

Cola™ beverage served via a silver platter. The technique of showing natural foods in a

commercial for the Coca Cola™ product may have been an attempt by Coca Cola™ to create the

perception among consumers that the Coca Cola™ beverage has a legitimate place in a healthy

lifestyle.

The use of marketing techniques which convey the message of advertised food products

being associated with health is an act of deceptive communication in most cases. Food

companies use images and written text to create a 'health halo' causing consumers to perceive the advertised food products to be healthier than they are in reality. Researchers Castonguay, McKinley, & Kunkel (2013) found that among a sample of televised food advertisements aired in the USA on children's programming in 2009, over half (56.9%) contained one or more health messages including health claims, depictions of fruit and depictions of physical activity. However, despite the prevalent use of health messages in food advertisements directed at children, approximately half (51.9%) of the products promoted as healthy were of poor nutritional quality (Castonguay et al., 2013). The problem with food advertisers using health messages in their marketing campaigns is that it can cause confusion among youth consumers when foods of poor nutrient quality are paired with health messages, since this technique can create a priming effect in which any food (healthy or less healthy) can be perceived as healthy based on messaging (Castonguay et al., 2013).

In reference to Habermas's interpretation of Critical Social Theory, the use of health appeals in the promotion of less healthy products such as sugar or caffeine laden beverages promotes distorted communication between youth consumers and food companies, which reinforces the power differences between them (Ozanne & Murray, 1995).

5.2.6   Consumer engagement.

The 'Consumer Engagement' theme consisted of categories as displayed in Table 9 which involved food marketers interacting with consumers by either presenting messages which urged consumers to engage in certain activities related to the food brand or involved marketers replying to consumers' posted comments.

Table 9

Categories Included in Consumer Engagement Theme and Food Companies Which Displayed each Marketing Technique

Categories	Food Company Directing Consumer to Do Something	Food Brand Marketing Propaganda	Food Company Responding to Consumer(s) Comments
Food Companies	Coca Cola	Coca Cola	Coca Cola
	McDonald's Restaurant	Taco Bell Restaurant	McDonald's Restaurant
	Reese's Peanut Butter Cups	Kellogg's Pop-Tarts	Monster Energy Drink
	Oreo		Reese's Peanut Butter Cups
	Monster Energy Drinks		Skittles
	Taco Bell Restaurant		Taco Bell Restaurant
	Kellogg's Pop-Tarts		Kellogg's Pop-Tarts
	Gatorade		Nestle Perrier
	Doritos		Gatorade
	Lundberg Family Farms		Lundberg Family Farms

5.2.6.1 Food company directing consumer to do something.

The marketing technique of 'Food Company Directing Consumer to Do Something' involved the food companies directing consumers to do a certain task or asking for a response to questions posted on the social media sites. For example, Coca Cola™ posted a few videos on YouTube™ that depicted pop-machines with messages written across the front of them. In a video (YouTube, October 25/13) posted by Coca Cola™, a red vending machine was displayed in a park-like outdoor setting. The camera zoomed in on the vending machine to reveal the phrase "To open happiness take off your shoes" written across the front of the machine in white lettering.

In some instances food companies posted messages on social media sites that seemed to be intended to persuade consumers to engage in activities that were disguised as "fun" but were really forms of marketing the food brand. After Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ posted a video on

YouTube that involved thorough instructions on how to make a Pop-Tart™ Halloween costume, they posted a direction or request on Facebook asking consumers to show their costumes. Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ was under the assumption that some consumers watched their video tutorial on how to make a Pop-Tart™ costume and then constructed a costume. On October 28/13 Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ gave consumers a direction:

"All right, we gave you the tutorial; now show us your Pop-Tart costumes! #PopTartsCrazyGood" (FC-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-F-Oct 28/13).

Consumers were at times receptive to suggestions made by food companies on their social media sites. Some food companies prompted consumers to post replies to questions posted by the companies. For example, Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ posed a question to consumers on Twitter and then directed them to reply to the question.

"What's the best part of the first day back to school? Reply and tell us #PopTartsCrazyGood" (FC-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-T-Sept 4/13).

A couple of consumers humoured Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ by posting replies to the question posed, with one consumer proclaiming that the best part of their first day back to school was having Pop-Tarts™ in their lunch.

"@PopTarts411 I had Pop-Tarts in my lunch!" (C-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-T-Sept 4/13).

Responses in which consumers indicated that they would follow orders from the food companies involved consumers indicating in their comments that they were performing an activity or would be willing to perform an activity as directed by the food brand. One consumer proclaimed their willingness to sell their soul to Skittles™ in order to obtain a large free bag of Skittles™.

"@Skittles what's it gonna take for you to send me a big skittle bag full of skittles? I will do ANYTHING" (C-Skittles™-T-Sept 17/13).

Social media allows food brands to interact with consumers in a more intimate way compared to other forms of advertisements such as print and television media, or even regular websites. Since youth are used to interacting with their peers on social media, perhaps frequently responding to questions posed by one of their collective group of "friends", answering requests posted by food brands may just seem like a natural extension of youth's everyday social media use.

5.2.6.2 Food brand marketing propaganda.

The marketing technique of 'Food Brand Marketing Propaganda' involved food companies using approaches comparable to that of propaganda during the World Wars. A post made by Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™ on Twitter stated the following"

> "Fact: You can't be sad when you're eating a Pop-Tart. It's science. #PopTartsCrazyGood http://instagram.com/p/g0kTtJK5aN/". (FC-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-T-Nov 17/13).

Taco Bell™ Restaurant also presented "brain-washing" type messages about their brand on T-shirts they gave to a music band that they sponsored as part of the Feed the Beat marketing campaign. In a tweet posted on Twitter on August 27/13 by Taco Bell™ Restaurant, the three member music band New Politics was shown standing on a red carpet at an outdoor event holding up black t-shirts. On the black t-shirts the words "If you don't like Taco Bell you're wrong" were written in white lettering.

While a majority of consumers seemed to happily accept propaganda type marketing messaging presented by food companies, perhaps evidenced by their propensity towards positive comments regarding the food brands and lack of negative commentary, a handful of consumers expressed their displeasure with marketing propaganda produced by food brands. For example, one video posted on YouTube by Coca Cola™ garnered much positive reaction from consumers;

however a subsection of consumers responded negatively towards the messaging in the video.

One consumer likened the marketing messages presented in the Coca Cola™ video to Nazi

propaganda textbooks.

> "It's interesting to me that Coke would produce a commercial like this. It simply frames total surveillance in a positive light, it is suggestive advertising to connect a warm feeling to being spied on from all angles. Look at history, this kind of consolidation of power and the use of suggestion to influence public opinion is out of the Nazi propaganda text books." (C-Coca Cola™-Y-Oct 31/13).

The 'Food Marketing Propaganda' marketing technique involved food brands making

bold statements that were presented as facts, which painted the advertised food brands in a

positive light. Also these propaganda type statements tended to be stated in a playful, light-

hearted manner which may have contributed to consumers' general passive acceptance of these

statements, since they could be passed off as "just a joke".

5.2.6.3 Food company responding to consumer(s) comments.

Food companies engaged with consumers by replying to consumer's comments. While

some food companies choose not to respond to any consumer comments, others consistently

responded to consumers' comments regardless if they were of a positive or negative nature.

McDonald's™ Restaurant took the stance of consistently responding to consumer tweets

regarding the 140 Character Films marketing campaign. A McDonald's™ brand representative

posted comments in response to contest submissions made by consumers, usually praising

consumers for the creativity of their submissions.

> "@Name, very creative submission #MakeMyFilm ^JB" (FC-McDonald's™ restaurant-T-Aug 20/13-Sept19/13).

Food brands also posted comments on their social media sites in response to consumers

making complaints. Food brand representatives apologized for consumers' bad experiences and

encouraged them to contact the company to receive incentives such as coupons, etc. In a post

made by Gatorade™ on Facebook Gatorade™ offered an apology to a dissenting consumer and

encouraged the person to contact the Gatorade™ consumer relations team to report their bad

experience.

> "So sorry that happened, (Name). Mind reporting it? Please email our Consumer
> Relations team at Gatorade@casupport.com. [2 likes]" (FC-Gatorade™-F-Sept 5/13).

A detailed content analysis conducted by Freeman et al. (2014) that involved an

examination of the 27 most popular food and beverage brand Facebook pages available in

Australia revealed that consumer engagement was a prevalent marketing technique used, with 23

food brand pages displaying conversations between the food marketer and Facebook followers.

The most popular Facebook page examined had a very high level of consumer engagement with

the food brand responding to almost every consumer post, which the researchers suggested may

have attributed to the page's popularity.

In their examination of the marketing techniques of sugary beverages, Harris et al. (2014)

found that food brands encouraged consumers to interact with the brand on Facebook in diverse

and creative ways, by posting content that linked to other social media sites for the brand. Harris

et al. (2014) reported that the beverage brands examined which utilized a Facebook page often

directed consumers to 'like" posts and enter contests. Also, similar to the findings of this study,

Harris et al. (2014) found that some beverage brands tended to interact directly with Twitter

followers by consistently responding to the posts made on the brand's Twitter site.

Marketing techniques involving consumer engagement allowed consumers an

opportunity to develop a two-way communication with food companies. However not all

consumer engagement marketing techniques were equal, some food companies allowed for fairer

or a more "Ideal Speech Situation" than others. In some cases consumers noted that their

previous comments had been deleted by the food companies, which explicitly demonstrates how

food companies have the ultimate power over the communication that takes place on their social media sites.

> "Please stop deleting my suggestions. I'd bet I've bought more Pop starts than anyone on this site.. (C-Kellogg's Pop-Tarts™-F-Oct14/13).

Sometimes consumers initiated communication with the food companies by directing questions to the companies. For example a consumer posed a question to Lundberg Family Farm™ regarding their ingredient sourcing:

> "@lundbergfarms Is your rice Non-GMO?" (C-Lundberg Family Farms™-T-May 8/13).

The marketing technique in which food brands respond to consumer comments demonstrates how social media allows for a direct line of communication with youth. Food brands that elect to respond to consumer comments and questions also have the opportunity to defend against negative comments made regarding the food brand such as dispelling myths about product ingredients or informing consumers once a change has been made to product formulation.

Chapter 6: Implications and Conclusion

6.1 Implications of findings

A social ecological theoretical framework for health promotion identifies the contexts and interrelationships among risk factors that influence health (McMurray, 2007). Food marketing to youth on social media can be considered one of many potential risk factors to health. Bronfenbrenner, the originator of the social ecological approach, viewed the social environment in which an individual resides as made up of layers of structures which have a powerful impact on the individual in terms of development and health (Berk, 2009). The layers of the social environment specified in the Social Ecological Theory include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and the macrosystem (Berk, 2009).

The microsystem level of the environment involves the activities and interaction patterns in the individual's immediate environment and the mesosystem involves the connection between microsystems (Berk, 2009). The exosystem is the aspect of the social environment that affects the individual's experiences such as formal organizations (Berk, 2009). The macrosystem is the outer most layer of the social ecological model and consists of the rule aspects of the social environment including cultural values, laws and customs (Berk, 2009). As a whole the core concept of an ecological model is that behaviour has multiple levels of influence including intrapersonal (biological, psychological), interpersonal (social, cultural), organizational, community, physical environment and policy (Sallis, Owen, & Fisher, 2008).

Story et al., (2002) integrated the concepts of an ecological perspective and the Social Cognitive Theory to create a theoretical framework which could assist in understanding factors that influence adolescent eating behaviour. This theoretical framework involves four levels of

influence including individual influences (intrapersonal), social environmental influences (interpersonal), physical environmental influences (community settings), and macrosystem influences (societal).

In the present study, the Social Ecological Model was used as a way to understand the impact of food marketing to youth through social media on youth health based on multiple influences. At the intrapersonal level or microsystem level the amount of time a youth decides to spend on social media websites will affect their potential level of exposure to food marketing via social media websites and subsequently have a potential effect on their eating attitudes and behaviours. At the interpersonal or mesosystem level youth's online social networks may influence the degree to which they engage in social media food marketing. For example other peers in a youth's social network may influence their access to food marketing content by sharing links to marketing campaign content on social media sites.

At the organizational or exosystem level there are organizations such as the Center for Science in the Public Interest and the Yale Rudd Center for Obesity and Policy that advocate for changes to the food marketing landscape (particularly in regards to that directed at children and youth) so that it may not affect youth in a negative way (Richarson & Harris, 2011). Thus far the pressure from organizations that advocate for changes to the food marketing landscape has resulted in some food companies altering their marketing approach to children under 12 years of age with the formation of the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (Canada and U. S.) (Council of Better Business Bureau, 2013).

At the community level the impact of exposure to food marketing on social media could possibly be mitigated by local health programs which promote healthy behaviours or provide

education on media literacy. For example Internet citizenship initiatives could occur in the youth's local area.

The policy level or the macrosystem level of influence involves the policies or lack of policies which influence what foods or beverages are acceptable to be marketed to youth and the methods of the food marketing that are allowed. The food industry has shown considerable political power in the past in terms of influencing policies related to food marketing regulation; however there is the potential for utilizing civic engagement (parents, community health organizations) in an attempt to influence policy using a ground up approach. The findings from the study may provide knowledge that can inform health programs delivered to youth and the policy level or influence policy development regarding food marketing to youth.

Moved this section from the theoretical importance section: The study findings may be useful to public health practitioners who are interested in using social media as a health promotion tool to reach youth audiences. These practitioners may be able to use some of the same techniques used by food marketers for their social marketing campaigns that are intended for youth. The American Heart Association released a scientific statement in 2013 in which the authors, Li, Barnett, Goodman, Wasserman and Kemper suggested that social media be utilized as a tool for the management of childhood obesity. Public health practitioners may also be able to use information gained from the proposed study in their practices to assist children and youth to engage with social media in a critical manner. The Canadian Council on Learning (2008) suggested that media literacy is an important tool to facilitate children's navigation of the new digital media world to ensure their experience is safe and enjoyable.

Findings from the study may be used to inform policy development regarding food marketing to youth through social media. Historically research has played an integral role in

informing and prompting policy development in other areas of public health such as tobacco control (Warner & Tam, 2012). Some concern exists that previous food marketing campaigns using social media were deceptive in nature towards the intended adolescent audience (Center for Digital Democracy, 2011). Therefore results from the study could help in the guidance of policies (both governmental or self-regulatory), which may help to ensure that food marketing practices on social media websites are conducted in an ethical manner and not damaging to the health of adolescents.

This study contributes to the research literature regarding social media food marketing to youth. It was unique in comparison to recent studies that addressed this topic in that it not only involved an analysis of the marketing techniques of food companies using social media but also involved an analysis of the responses of North American youth exposed to such techniques. To the best of my knowledge an analysis of North American youths' responses to social media food marketing has not been analyzed previously, despite social media such as Twitter being posited as a useful tool for public health research in areas such as surveillance of behavioural risk factors among the US public (Paul, & Dredze, 2011). Also a qualitative analysis has not been previously conducted on food brand marketing content on social media, as previous work focused on a quantitative assessment of food brand content on social media (Freeman et al., 2014; Harris et al., 2014). The data collection and analysis methods used in this study may act as a reference for future research regarding the marketing of foods to youth, since further monitoring of food marketing activity on social media would be beneficial given the active presence of food brands on social media combined with youths' heavy usage of social media.

The specific findings of this study have multi-disciplinary implications in fields such as education, public health (health promotion) and social policy. In the education sphere these

findings may be useful to inform aspects of curriculum such as media literacy interventions.

Additionally the results of this study may be useful to share with students of health professions to

help in developing awareness of the presence of social media food marketing. Aspects of media

literacy interventions which address social media food marketing could be integrated into school

curricula, since the Canadian Council on Learning (2008) has recommended the use of media

literacy as a tool to assist youth in safely navigating the digital media world. Media literacy

programs which address social media food marketing could include use of social media by youth

to achieve learning outcomes.

Social media could be used to engage youth consumers in social advocacy and mobilize

them to prompt changes to food products to make formulations more healthful. Findings from

the present study indicated that many youth consumers were able to view food marketing

through a critical lens as evidenced by their critical comments regarding food products and their

comments which aimed to prompt civic engagement among peers. Educators could encourage

youth consumers to be critical consumers and to facilitate their power of influence in addressing

food companies and peers to promote positive changes in the food industry. Findings from the

present study indicate that some youth are responding to social media food marketing content in

a critical manner and are attempting to promote changes by engaging in activities such as

boycotting food products. However, it is important to note that these critical actions and

comments made by youth are taking place on social media; therefore educators would be wise to

utilize social media as a vehicle to deliver media literacy education since youth have already

demonstrated their willingness to act critically using these forms of media.

Health Promoters may be able to borrow some of the marketing techniques utilized by

food marketers to launch health promotion programs. Food marketers are increasingly using

social media for marketing food brands to youth and are rapidly increasing engagement with youth on these media platforms (Harris et al., 2014). Findings from the current study indicate that youth are engaging with social media food marketing in a manner which may influence their food-related attitudes and behaviours and these new marketing techniques may be prompting youth to intentionally or unintentionally market food brands to other youth. Health Promoters could use social media as a method for engaging youth in health promotion type messages and also copy the specific marketing techniques used by food marketers. For example, to increase the success outcomes of a Health Promotion program intended to improve the health of North American youth, social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter could be utilized to deliver the program. Specific social marketing techniques such as posting questions or directions on these sites, developing advergames and offering contests that require youth to develop user-generated content could also be considered as methods to engage youth.

While previously food marketers had the upper hand financially in terms of marketing campaigns in comparison to public health practitioners, social media marketing offers a near equal playing ground since the development of a social media site is essentially free. While developing social media sites is much less expensive than other forms of advertising such as television ads, print ads or a website, it will still be important to not underfund this aspect of a potential public health intervention. When implementing public health interventions to address youth health concerns it will be important to allot sufficient funding to social media marketing including wages for an individual who will regularly post content on the social media sites and respond to youth comments. Also funding for public health social media marketing campaigns could include funding for prizes for contests and ongoing development of pictures and videos which will be posted and updated on the social media sites. Specific campaign messaging should

be well researched, again drawing on techniques used by food marketers that work to engage youth by development of an aura of coolness and also that encourages youth to share content which will further influence their peer networks. Engaging youth in developing social marketing campaigns themselves could help garner greater acceptance of campaign messaging among their peers.

Findings of the current study revealed the unfair practices used by food marketers to influence the eating attitudes and behaviours of North American youth, which demonstrates the need to protect youth with the development of government policies. For example in the present study there was evidence that some youth younger than 13 years of age were easily accessing marketing content on food brands' social media sites, yet the majority of food brands examined were selected from the CFBAI which involved food companies pledging not to market to youth under age 12 years of age. While these companies have pledged to not market less healthy food products to youth under age 12 years (or to not market to this age group at all) they have not put safe guards in place to ensure that youth younger than age 12 are not accessing social media food marketing content. While food marketers cannot do anything about the potential for youth to lie about their age, they could create further barriers that make it more difficult to access their social media sites. It is not sufficient to make the assumption that only youth 13 years and older are on social media sites, since previous research indicates about half of Canadian youth pretended to be a different age when using the Internet (Media Awareness Network, 2005).

Another unfair practice by food marketers which should be regulated is the targeting of specific youth in marketing campaigns. Currently, social media such as Twitter sell services to marketers which allow them to more precisely target their marketing efforts based on consumer profile demographics (Twitter, Inc., 2013a). Findings from the present study indicated that food

marketers did in fact engage in targeted marketing since consumer comments indicated they were receiving unsolicited food marketing content on their social media news feeds. Previous findings have indicated that food marketers target some groups more heavily such as ethnic minorities and those of low SES (Powell, Wada, & Kumanyika, 2014). Such marketing techniques are unethical since they contribute to widening the health inequity gap among these demographics of youth, who are already burdened with higher rates of obesity and chronic disease (Rossen, & Schoendorf, 2012; Price, Khubchandani, McKinney, & Braun, 2013). Creating policies which directly act to regulate practices of social media sites by restricting targeted marketing of food or beverage products could possibly provide protection to youth that are particularly vulnerable to the ill effects of food marketing.

Negative comments presented by consumers reveal a rich source of information concerning some consumers' beliefs about advertised food products such as perceptions that certain foods cause diseases or that only "fat" people consume certain products. This information allows public health experts to have a small glimpse into consumers' perceptions of the connection between obesity, health and advertised food products. Additionally, it is important to gain an understanding of how some youth view obesity among their peers. Attitudes towards overweight and obese individuals that demonstrate weight bias may be indicative of youths' exposure to messages that promote negative views of overweight individuals. Youth may be exposed to such messages through media, but also could receive such messaging from adults in authoritative roles such as teachers or health professionals. Findings from Greenleaf, and Weiller (2005) indicated that among a sample of U. S. physical education teachers surveyed (n=105, mean age=42.38) 76.39% believed that individuals had a great deal of personal control over their weight and these participants held moderate anti-fat attitudes.

Such findings may reinforce the importance of being conscious of what messages regarding obesity are put forth to youth by individuals in roles of authority such as teachers and health care professionals. It is important to foster attitudes of acceptance among youth, towards peers of an obese weight status, since research findings indicate that increased exposure to weight stigma increases poor health outcomes among overweight youth. Among a sample of American adolescents (N= 2793, mean age= 14.4 years old) surveyed, it was found that those who experienced weight-based teasing in the school setting were more likely to experience lower self esteem and body dissatisfaction (among girls) and depressive symptoms (among boys) (Lampard, MacLehose, Eisenburg, Neumark-Sztainer, & Davison, 2014).

Future research should aim to continue the monitoring of social media food marketing to keep abreast of the marketing techniques and popularity of food brands on social media. Harris et al. (2014) found a dramatic increase in soda brand likes on Facebook since their initial examination of sugar-sweetened beverage marketing on social media, with likes for soda brands increasing from 55 million fans in 2011 to 189 million likes in 2014. This finding indicates that youth consumers are becoming increasingly engaged in social media food marketing which demonstrates the need to continue to monitor social media food marketing activity and consumer responses. Further research should involve further analysis of how consumers respond to this type of marketing. The monitoring of consumer responses can also be used as a gauge of youth consumers' attitudes towards food products, nutrition and obesity. Further qualitative research that involves interviewing youth consumers about their exposure and engagement with social media food marketing may allow researchers to capture the responses of youth that are not posted on social media sites and may allow for a greater understanding of how social media food marketing influences North American youth. For example youth may be exposed to social media

food marketing and not post any content on food brand sites, but still be influenced in a later food purchase decision or verbally discuss the marketing campaign with peers or family members. Gaining insight on these incidents would be useful in understanding the far-reaching effects of exposure to social media food marketing among youth. Also further research regarding the stealth techniques of targeting youth on food brand social media sites should be further explored to gain more knowledge of the mechanisms behind them, such as how food marketers gain access to youth's social media profiles placing "suggested posts" which are advertisements for food products on their news feeds. The findings of this study have implications in informing further research in the area of food marketing to youth through social media, public health interventions related to media literacy and policy development.

6.2 Conclusion

Results of the study indicate that food marketers utilize a variety of engaging marketing techniques which may influence the food-related attitudes and behaviours of North American youth. Also food marketing techniques via social media seem to be designed to encourage rapid sharing of marketing messages throughout social networks. Food marketers also have direct access to communicating with youth in a two-way conversation which is unique to other forms of food advertising which are more passive in nature. Use of social media for marketing campaigns allows food marketers to respond and act on consumers' responses to the marketing messages, sometimes mitigating negative consumer comments.

This study provided insight into how consumers are responding to food marketing and engaging with food brand content on social media. Since other youth are viewing the comments, images, and videos posted by youth on social media sites, youth are potentially influencing each other regarding social norms for food brand marketing engagement and eating attitudes and

behaviours. An encouraging finding of the study was that not all youth consumers are passive recipients of food marketing messages via social media, as many posted critical comments and made attempts at influencing change among food brands and other youth. This finding may indicate that youth would be receptive to health interventions or policy advocacy activities which are delivered using social media. Public health practitioners could potentially engage youth in health promotion activities such as developing media literacy and social policy advocacy in relation to food marketing using social media platforms, since some youth have already demonstrated willingness to engage in these activities amongst themselves. Developing formalized social media pages dedicated to specific health promoting goals may enhance the level of participation of youth in these activities and thus have the potential to positively influence youth health outcomes. Social media has been shown to be useful in youth-oriented mental health campaigns, increasing the ability to reach previously underserved groups, encouraging their engagement in accessing health services and participating in discussions regarding mental health (Goodman, Wennerstrom, & Springgate, 2011). A project which involved the development of a social media site called "Generation Pulse" which initially was intended to connect with youth from New Orleans who had been affected by flooding due to Hurricane Katrina, eventually extended in reach to engage youth from across the world in a variety of topics, including health and social justice (Liang, Commins, & Duffy, 2010). Since its inception in 2005, Generation Pulse has allowed for insight into processes that help ensure that using social media to promote healthy youth development is successful, including directly involving youth in development of campaign messaging, seeking ongoing feedback from youth to determine what is relevant to different age groups and planning ahead to ensure accessibility and sustainability of the project.

There is a need to maintain updated research programs which will allow researchers to keep up with the rapid evolution of food marketing to youth via social media. Further in-depth analysis of food marketing to youth through social media may allow researchers to determine if there is an association between this newer form of food marketing and obesity among youth, similar to the association found between televised food advertising and adiposity among youth (Institute of Medicine, 2006). There is also a need to gain research evidence which will aid in the development of health promotion programs and assist in the development of policies to protect youth from exploitation and unfair methods of persuasion, which are unjustly performed by food companies using social media. However it may also be time to take a more asset-based approach to addressing the issue of food marketing to youth, and aim to mobilize youth in advocacy efforts which will pressure food companies to make positive changes to their marketing campaigns and food products. Public health practitioners who work directly with youth, such as Community Nutritionists, Health Promoters, Public Health Nurses, School Nurses and Social Workers could facilitate development of youth social media sites which aim to encourage healthy eating among youth and influence change regarding social policies and food marketing. Public health practitioners could be instrumental in providing resources to youth to allow them to development social media sites and ongoing content for such sites, while providing space for youth to take leadership in social media marketing campaigns. Also collaborative partnerships between the public health field and education sector could be beneficial in integrating social media marketing campaign efforts that address food marketing to youth, into curricula.

There have been recent cases of food companies making alterations to their marketing campaigns and food products because of pressure from dissenting consumers, who used social media in their social activist efforts (Guerra, 2015; Veil et al., 2015). Therefore although the

increased use of social media among youth has allowed for an exceptional marketing opportunity for food marketers, consumers have also benefited from social media in terms of their social advocacy efforts. As the social climate shows signs of food companies loosening their influential grip over youth, health promoters should take advantage of this window of opportunity by facilitating the building of youths' self-efficacy in positively impacting the food environment around them. Public Health Practitioners can be instrumental in supporting youth in the development of media literacy and in building their capacity for critical analysis and leadership and advocacy in addressing food marketing through social media.

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Appendix A

Canadian and U.S. Food Company Participants of the Canadian Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative

Canadian Participants

Burger King Restaurants of Canada, Inc.

Campbell Company of Canada

Coca-Cola Ltd.

Danone Inc.

Ferrero Canada Ltd.

General Mills Canada Corporation

Hershey Canada Inc.

Janes Family Foods Ltd.

Kellogg Canada Inc.

Kraft Canada Inc.

Mars Canada Inc.

McCain Foods (Canada)

McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Limited

Nestlé Canada Inc.

Parmalat Canada

PepsiCo Canada ULC

Post Foods Canada Corp.

Unilever Canada Inc.

Weston Bakeries Limited

U.S. Participants

The Coca-Cola Company

Hershey Company

Mars Incorporated

Burger King Corp

Campbell Soup Company

ConAgra Foods, Inc.

The Dannon Company, Inc.

General Mills, Inc.

Hillshire Brands Co. (formerly Sara Lee Corp.)

Kellogg Company

Kraft Foods, Group, Inc.

McDonald's USA

Mondelez Global LLC

Nestle USA

PepsiCo, LLC

Post Foods, LLC

Unilever

Appendix B

Code List with Definitions

Anthropomorphism of Food

Quotations: 356

Food company markets food products using an anthropomorphism of food concept. Food is presented with human like attributes such as having faces and arms and legs.

Associating Consumption of Food Product with Social Cohesion

Quotations: 198

Food or beverage company promotes product in such a way that indicates an association with social interaction. Images and text give the impression that consumption of product goes along with spending time with others and feeling included within a group.

Associating Food Brand with Sports

Quotations: 656

Food company is presenting marketing messages that indicate that food brand is associated with sports including sports images, sponsorship of sports team or athlete endorsement of the brand.

Associating Product with Outdoor Activity

Quotations: 41

Food product marketing involves display of images of people engaging in outdoor activities.

Comment Indicates Weight Stigma

Quotations: 17

Consumer is making a comment that conveys negative messages about people who are overweight or obese and in some cases may include stereotypes.

Concerns about Ethical Sourcing of Meat

Quotations: 5

Consumer is expressing concerns over ethical sourcing of meat including humane treatment of animals produced as meat sources for food company.

Consumer's Eating Behaviours are Influenced by Another Consumer

Quotations: 9

Consumer indicates that their eating behaviour is or will be influenced by another consumer including peers or parents.

Consumer Asking Food Company Questions about Product

Quotations: 35

Consumer is asking food company questions about food product such as where to purchase it or sources of ingredients.

Consumer Boycotted Food Product

Quotations: 14

Consumer has decided not to buy food product because of actions of the food company which they perceive as negative. (e.g., food product contains ingredients which include GMOs.)

Consumer Calling on Food Company to be Advocate

Quotations: 15

Consumer is calling on food or beverage company to take an advocacy role in social issues. The consumer is requesting that the company use their power to advance social causes.

Consumer Calling on Government to Address Food Marketing

Quotations: 1

Consumer is advocating for policy change at the governmental level.

Consumer Criticizes Food Company on a Moral Basis.

Quotations: 60

Consumer criticizes the food or beverage company using arguments of moral basis such as company not paying their workers a living wage.

Consumer Criticizes Other Consumers

Quotations: 264

Consumer criticizes the viewpoints or food consumption habits of other consumers who have also posted comments.

Consumer Educating Other Consumers

Quotations: 61

Consumer is attempting to educate other consumers by posting nutrition or health information.

Consumer Engaging in Marketing for Food Company

Quotations: 113

Consumer is conducting free marketing for food or beverage company by re-posting messages from food company or by re-formulating the marketing messages and posting them on social media sites.

Consumer Engaging in Sedentary Activities

Quotations: 9

Consumer indicates that they are being sedentary or intend to be sedentary.

Consumer Equates Food Product to Poison

Quotations: 51

Consumer suggests that food or beverage product is poisonous or contains pathogens such as bacteria.

Consumer Follows Order from Food Company

Quotations: 38

The food or beverage company makes a demand on consumers by directing them to do things in their marketing messages and the consumer follows the directions.

Consumer Indicates that Food Company is being Deceptive

Quotations: 35

Consumer indicates that the food company is being deceptive in how they are presenting their marketing messages.

Consumer Indicates That They Consumed Food Product in the Past or Present

Quotations: 123

Consumer indicates that they have previously consumed the advertised food or beverage product or that they are consuming the advertised food or beverage product at the time they are posting a comment on the food company social media site.

Consumer Inquiring if Others Have Engaged with Marketing Campaign like themselves

Quotations: 25

Consumer posts a comment in which they ask if other consumers have engaged with the marketing campaign in the same way that they have.

Consumer is Counter-advertising

Quotations: 18

The consumer shares messages or user-generated content that has the potential to decrease popularity of the food or beverage company. Such actions may be considered counter-advertising.

Consumer is Interested in Purchasing Food Brand Merchandise

Quotations: 36

Consumer displays interest in buying merchandise related to the food or beverage brand (e.g., clothing with logos).

Consumer is Playing with Food

Quotations: 91

Consumer is engaging with the food product in a playful manner as if the product was a toy or some form of entertainment.

Consumer Notes Power of Food Company

Quotations: 18

Consumer makes a comment about the power of the food or beverage company in terms of financial, political, etc.

Consumer Repeating Slogan for food brand

Quotations: 273

Consumer posts a comment that is the slogan of the food or beverage brand.

Consumer Requesting Food Company to Bring Back Previous Product

Quotations: 408

The consumer is making reference to a previous product offered by the food or beverage company. They are requesting that the product be offered again.

Consumer Requesting that Food Company Offer Healthy Food Product

Quotations: 13

Consumer is requesting that food company offer healthier food product such as less calories, smaller portion, lower sugar, etc.

Consumer Requests that Food Company offer New Product

Quotations: 275

Consumer asks food company to make a certain type of food product or offer a certain type of flavour.

Consumer Seeking Fame

Quotations: 15

Consumer makes a comment that indicates that they are interested in somehow acquiring fame, usually in connection to the food or beverage brand.

Consumer States that Marketing of Food Product Worked

Quotations: 6

Consumer indicates that they purchased advertised food or beverage product as a result of exposure to marketing campaign.

Consumers are Positively Evaluating Other Consumer's Responses to Food Marketing

Quotations: 28

Consumer is praising other consumers for their responses to the food or beverage company marketing campaign.

Consumers Calling on Other Consumers to be advocates for social change

Quotations: 3

Consumers are calling on other consumers to be advocates for social change in terms of their choices related to purchasing food or beverage products.

Consumption of Food Product Associated with Health Problems

Quotations: 80

Consumer perceives that consuming food product results in health problems such as diabetes, obesity or cancer.

Critical Evaluation of Marketing or Brand in General

Quotations: 862

 Consumer is making a critical comment about the food or beverage product in regards to the marketing technique or the brand in general.

Depiction of Healthy Food

Quotations: 4

Image or verbal description of food that would be perceived as healthy by the general public, such as fruit or vegetables.

Desire to Eat Food Product

Quotations: 188

Consumer comments that they want to eat or drink the advertised product.

Eating Food Product Makes Consumer Sick

Quotations: 16

Consumer indicates that consuming food or beverage product made them physically sick.

Eating on the Go

Quotations: 4

Consumer indicates that they consumed food product while doing another activity at the same time.

Exclusive Product

Quotations: 6

Food company indicates that they offer a food or beverage that is not offered by any other company.

Exposure to Food Marketing Prompts Positive Emotional Response

Quotations: 45

Consuming food product or viewing advertisement for food product improves mood of consumer including a display of a positive emotional response such as tears of joy.

Exposure to Marketing Prompts Negative Emotional Response

Quotations: 4

Consumer expresses that exposure to food marketing prompted them to have negative emotions such as sadness or frustration.

Fan not Consumer

Quotations: 11

Consumer self-identifies as a fan of the brand rather than a consumer.

Food Brand Logo on Sports Equipment or Clothing

Quotations: 52

Food or beverage company sponsors an athlete and thus the company logo is displayed on the athletes pieces of clothing and equipment.

Food Brand Marketing Propaganda

Quotations: 17

Food brand is marketing in a way that is reminiscent of war time propaganda.

Food Brand Uses Music Artists for Marketing

Quotations: 362

Food or beverage company uses music artists in their marketing campaign (e.g., singing in commercial or at a sponsored event.)

Food Company Infiltrating Consumers Social Media Profiles

Quotations: 11

Consumer indicates that they were targeted by food company in marketing campaign (i. e., advertising shows up on their Facebook homepage even though they have not liked the brand).

Food Company Directing Consumer to Do Something

Quotations: 181

Food company is directing consumer to do something such as answer a question posted on a social media site or to do an activity in order to gain an incentive such as free food or beverages.

Food Company Markets Food as Something to Play with

Quotations: 159

Food company is marketing food as something to play with using verbal messages or visual portrayals of characters playing with food.

Food Company Responding to Consumer(s) Comments

Quotations: 192

Food company has written a response to a consumer's post on a social media site.

Food Marketing in a School Setting

Quotations: 32

Marketing food brand is somehow linked into school such as school mascot, sponsoring school sports, mention of school in messaging, etc.

Food Product Associated with Happiness

Quotations: 105

Marketing messages or comments by consumers create association between food or beverage product and happiness. For example this message may be conveyed by using the term happiness or by showing images of characters smiling while consuming the food or beverage product.

Food Product is Presented as Gourmet

Quotations: 11

The food or beverage product is presented in a way that would be seen with gourmet products (e. g., presented on a fancy serving platter).

Food Product is used as Currency

Quotations: 27

Food product is used as a bribe to acquire benefits such as special treatment.

Food Product Marketed Like Alcohol Product

Quotations: 55

Food or beverage is marketed in a manner that resembles the techniques used for marketing alcoholic beverages or makes association with drugs.

Getting Back to Nature

Quotations: 23

Food product is marketed as being "natural" by promoting simple natural ingredients or displaying images of nature.

Incentives Offered by Food Company

Quotations: 97

As part of a marketing campaign food company is offering incentives such as prizes or giveaways.

Indication that Consumer is Addicted to Food Product

Quotations: 64

Consumer indicates that they feel addicted to food product by mentioning cravings or a need to obtain the food product through an impulsive manner, sometimes using unlawful behaviour such as violence and stealing to do so.

Language Related to Cool Lifestyle

Quotations: 174

Terms used by food or beverage company and or consumer that indicate a "cool" lifestyle. These cool language terms include profanity and slang terminology.

Positive Regard for Marketing Technique

Quotations: 1493

Consumer gives positive comment about the advertisement or brand in general.

Recognition that Food Product is not Healthy

Quotations: 100

Consumer indicates that they think the food or beverage product has unhealthy attributes (e. g., high in fat, contains GMOs, additives, etc.)

Reference to Gluten Free by either Consumer or Food Company

Quotations: 10

The consumer is either inquiring if the food company offers gluten free products or is requesting that the food company create gluten free products. Or the food company is promoting a gluten free product.

Subliminal Advertising

Quotations: 130

Food marketing that involves fleeting images of the branded product or subtle images that may prime reminders of the food brand such as colours that are the same as the product packaging.

Under Age Consumer

Quotations: 6

Consumer indicates in their comment that they under age 13 which is the lower age limit for use of the three social media sites (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube).

User-generated content

Quotations: 36

Creative content created by consumer that will assist in promoting the food or beverage brand.

Valuation of Excess Consumption

Quotations: 74

Consumer or marketer indicates valuation of large portion sizes of product.

Weight Gain Associated with Food Product Consumption

Quotations: 2

Consumer indicates that consuming the food product caused them to gain weight or consumer is suggesting that consumption of food product is linked to weight gain or obesity.

Wistful Consumer

Quotations: 63

Consumer wishes to do whatever activity is being depicted in the food brand advertising images.

Women as Sex Objects... Men as Consumers

Quotations: 36

Food company is presenting marketing messages that involve women being presented as sex objects, while males are being presented as being in control and being the consumers of the advertised products.

Appendix C

Figures Displaying Themes and Categories of Data Analysis Results
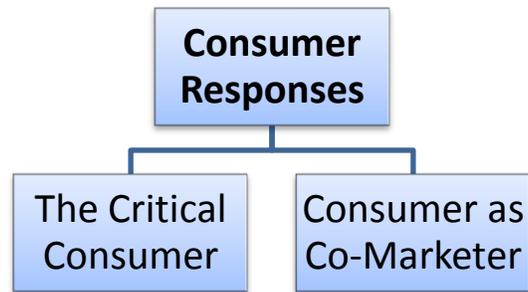
Figure 1. Display of two themes that involve consumer responses to marketing techniques.

Figure 2. Display of themes that involve marketing techniques used by food companies.
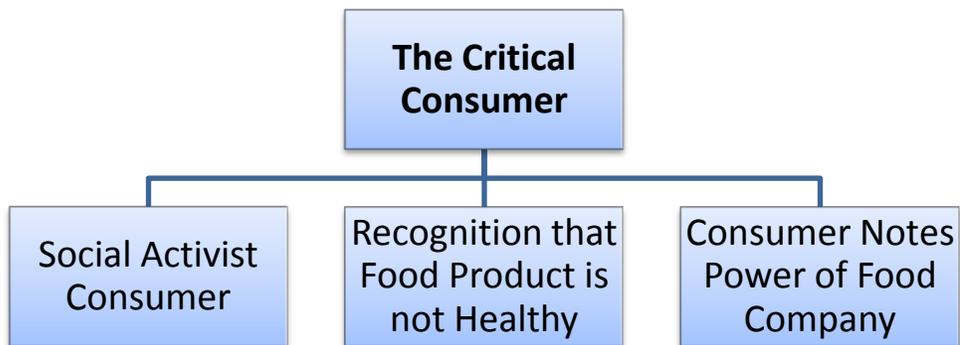
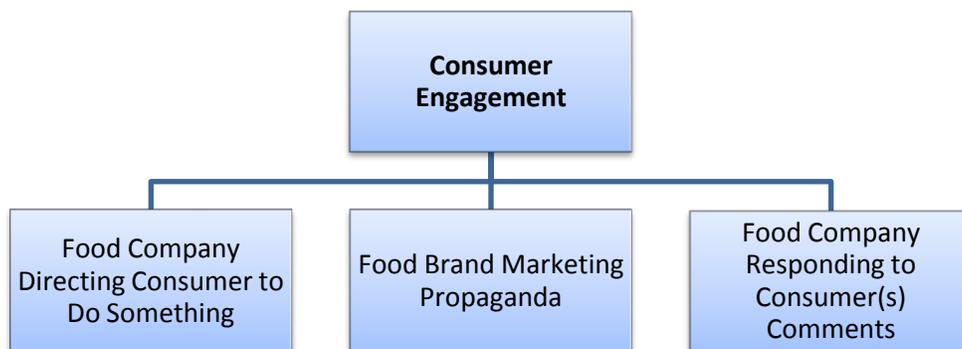*Figure 3.* Display of categories that contribute to 'The Critical Consumer' theme

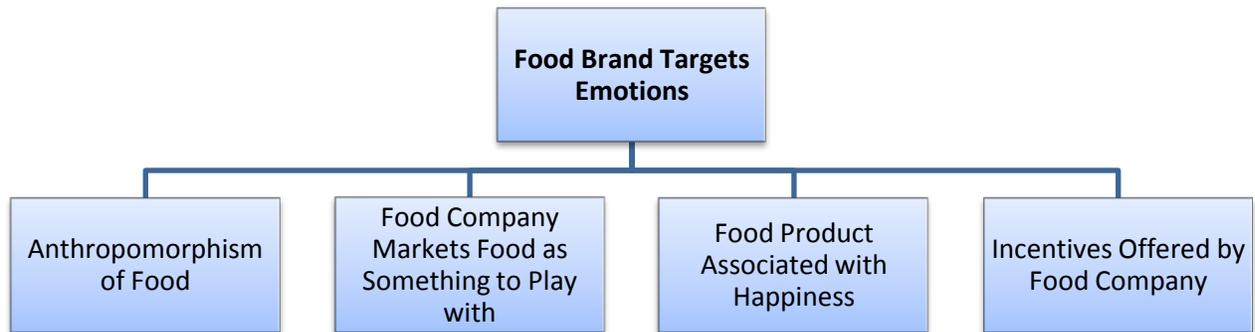*Figure 4.* Display of categories that contribute to the 'Consumer Engagement' theme.

Figure 5. Display of categories that contribute to the 'Food Brand Targets Emotions' theme.
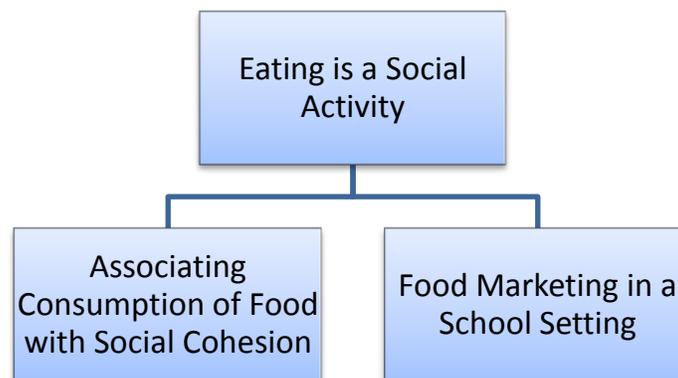
Figure 6. Display of categories that contribute to the 'Eating is a Social Activity' theme.

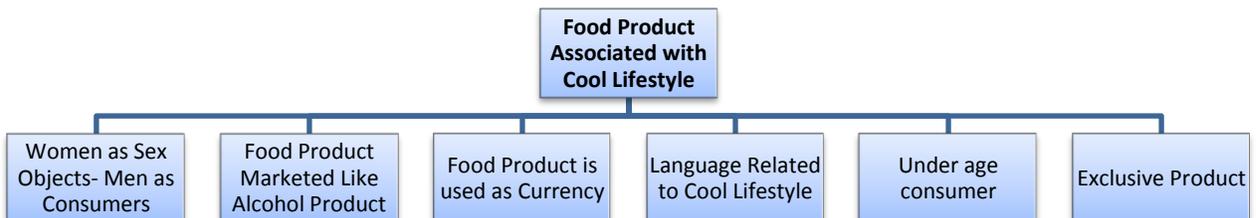*Figure 7.* Display of categories that contribute to the 'Stealth Marketing' theme.

Figure 8. Display of categories that contribute to the 'Food Product Associated with Cool Lifestyle' theme.
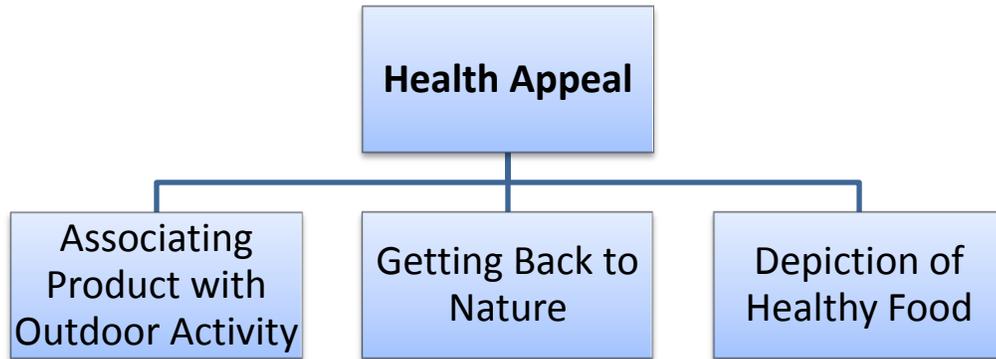
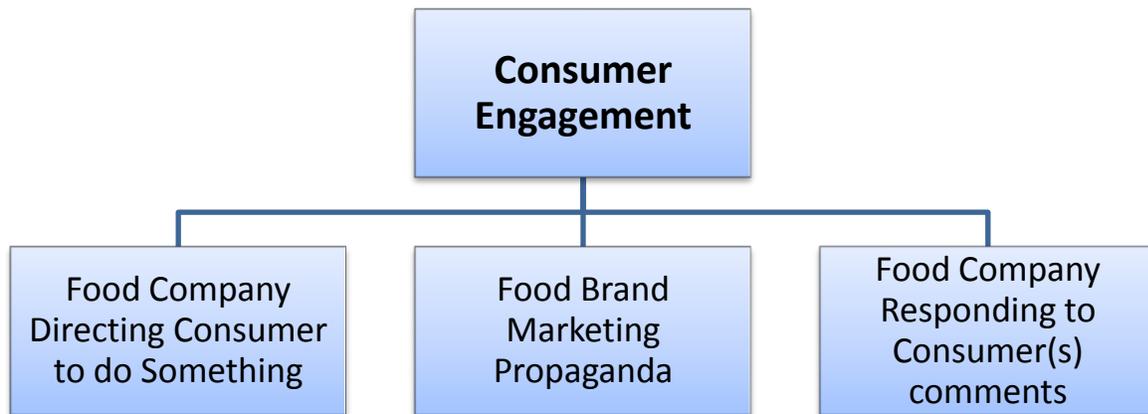*Figure 9.* Display of categories that contribute to the 'Health Appeal' theme.

Figure 10. Display of categories that contribute to the 'Consumer Engagement' theme