University of Macau
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
Department of Communication

Exploring the Art of Persuasion:

An Analysis of the Appeal Methods Used in Television Advertising for Children's Food and Beverage

Submitted by

Ren Zhijie, Karin

M-A9-5569-0

Supervisor: Dr. Chang Wen Yu, Angela

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted for the award of any other degree in any university or other institute of tertiary education. Information cited from the works of others has been acknowledged in the text.

1st December，2011

Ren Zhijie，Karin

UNIVERSIDADE DE MACAU
仁義禮知信
澳門大學

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ABSTRACT

Television advertising can be both an art of persuasion and a mirror to society. In recent years, childhood obesity has increased rapidly, which has led many to question the role that food and beverage advertising plays in this trend. Some previous studies have analyzed the techniques used in commercials and examined children's ability to understand the techniques which marketers used to appeal to them. However, little has been known about how these techniques are utilized in Mainland China. This study is a content analysis of the appeal methods used in television advertising of China for children's food and beverage. 489 samples in total were analyzed for audio-visual techniques, the presence of rewards for purchasing the product, product attribute themes and narrative themes. Obviously, 54.6% of sample commercials mentioned taste/flavor/smell/texture, 57.1% showed peers togetherness, 61.6% presented a general happy mood, 75.2% contained humor, and 92.8% contained a textual catchphrase or mentioned verbally. The study shows that the advertising techniques that advertisers use are those they believe to be the most effective. It also suggests that the techniques that children see the most often have the most potential impact on them. Therefore, advice on future research is made in order to assess the strength and type of this impact based on the appeal methods most frequently used.

Key words: *children obesity, food and beverage, television advertising, persuasive communication, appeal methods.*

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter I. Introduction……8
1.1 Background of the Thesis……8
1.2 Purpose of the Thesis ……9
1.3 Significance of the Thesis……11
1.4 Structure of the Thesis……12

Chapter II. Literature Review……13
2.1 Social Learning Theory……13
2.2 Television Advertising and Childhood Obesity……18
2.2.1 Children's Understanding of Advertising……18
2.2.2 The Influence of Television Advertising……23
2.3 Persuasive Appeals……29
2.4 Online Television Advertising……33
2.5 Research Questions……35

Chapter III. Methodology……37
3.1 Research Approach……37
3.2 Sample……37
3.3 Coding Variables……41
3.4 Research Instrument……42

Chapter IV. Findings……43
4.1 Data Analysis……43
4.2 Findings……44
4.2.1 Types of Food and Beverage Products……44
4.2.2 Persuasive Appeals……45
4.3 Results of Research Questions……59

Chapter V. Discussion……62
5.1 Discussion……62

Chapter VI. Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Research……67
6.1 Conclusion……67
6.2 Limitation……68
6.3 Recommendations for Future Research……68

Appendix……76

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Types of Food Products in Television Commercials Targeted at Children.....44

Table 2. Product Advertised: Total Ads/Healthy vs. Unhealthy Food Ads....45

Table 3. Summary of 5 Audio-visual Techniques Used in Television Commercials Targeted at Children.....46

Table 4. Audio-visual Techniques Used in Television Commercials Targeted at Children: Total Ads/Local vs. Foreign Brands.....46

Table 5. Audio-visual Techniques Used in Television Commercials Targeted at Children: Total Ads/Healthy vs. Unhealthy Food Ads.....49

Table 6. Audio-visual Techniques Used in Television Commercials Targeted at Children: Total Ads/Local vs. Foreign Brands.....50

Table 7. Premium Offering Techniques Used in Television Commercials Targeted at Children: Total Ads/Local vs. Foreign Brands.....51

Table 8. Premium Offering Techniques Used in Television Commercials Targeted at Children: Total Ads/Healthy vs. Unhealthy Food Ads.....52

Table 9. Summary of the 6 Product Attribute Theme Techniques Used in Television Commercials Targeted at Children.....53

Table 10. Product Attribute Theme Techniques Used in Television Commercials Targeted at Children: Total Ads/Local vs. Foreign Brands.....54

Table 11. Product Attribute Theme Techniques Used in Television Commercials Targeted at Children: Total Ads/Healthy vs. Unhealthy Food Ads.....55

Table 12. Summary of 5 Narrative Theme Techniques Used in Television Commercials Targeted at Children.....57

Table 13. Narrative Theme Techniques Used in Television Commercials Targeted at Children: Total Ads/Local vs. Foreign Brands.....57

Table 14. Narrative Theme Techniques Used in Television Commercials Targeted at Children: Total Ads/Healthy vs. Unhealthy Food Ads.....58

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. The Process from Modeled Events to Matching Patterns.....14

Figure 2. Sampling Flow Chart.....40

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