

## Background

The rise in childhood obesity is tied to the current food and beverage advertising climate<sup>1,2</sup>. Research has shown the following links between food marketing and public health outcomes among youth:

- Consumption is skewed towards unhealthy products as a majority of advertisements promote foods that do not fall within the dietary guidelines for America<sup>3</sup>.
- Advertising contributes to an increase in food consumption<sup>4</sup>.
- There is a positive correlation between exposure to food and beverage advertisements and rates of youth obesity<sup>5</sup>.

The impact of food and beverage advertising on youth was explored by examining how youth perceive advertisements to determine the mechanisms by which advertisements influence youth behavior and health outcomes.

## Materials and Methods

Two different sets of focus groups were conducted utilizing the same set of questions obtained from a previous similar study<sup>6</sup>.

First set of focus groups:

- A total of 75 individuals aged 8-12 years old participated.
- 13 focus groups were conducted from May-August 2010.
- Questions were asked about 5 print advertisements, all of which were determined to be youth oriented.

Second set of focus groups:

- A total of 40 individuals aged 11-14 years old participated.
- 8 focus groups were conducted from March-August 2014.
- Questions were asked about 6 outdoor advertisements, 3 of which were determined to be youth oriented.

All focus groups were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using a theme coding technique tying quotes to different themes.

## Results

Certain themes arose as influential in both sets of focus groups.

Themes that were tied to a positive reaction include:

- Comprehension
- Taste/Flavor
- Humor
- Informative
- Happiness
- Colorful

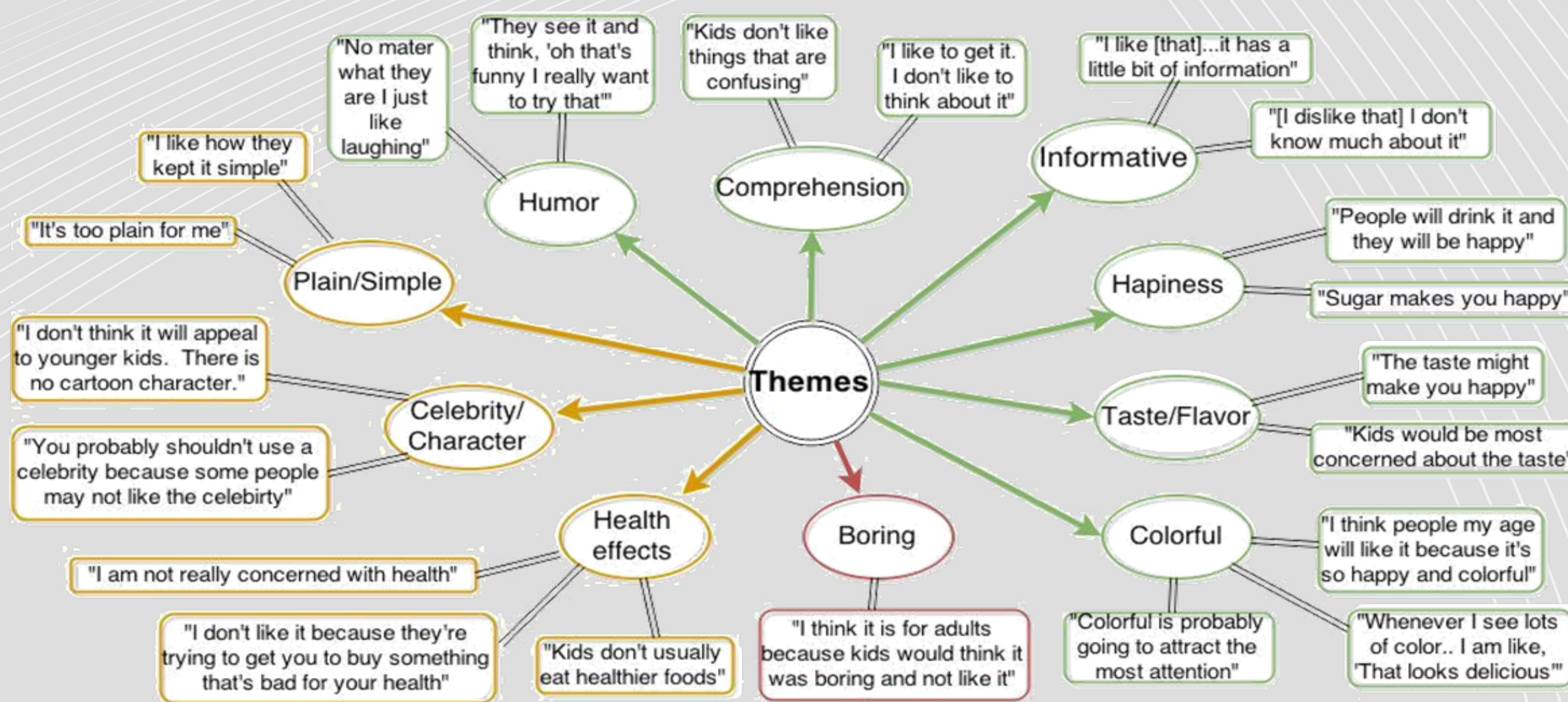
Advertisement themes that were negatively received included:

- Boring

Themes inducing mixed positive/negative responses included:

- Health effects
- Celebrity/character
- Plain/simple

Specific quotes from the focus groups create a more comprehensive understanding of context and opinion of themes in advertisements.



Direct quotes from focus groups highlight the specific thoughts that participants had about each theme. Theme are color coded: green for themes considered positive, red for negative and yellow for mixed positive/negative responses.

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