

I WANT IT NOW!

Summer Scholar: Katelynn Fuller
Victoria University of Wellington, School of Marketing and International Business

Email: katelynn@hotmail.co.nz

Supervisor: Janine Williams

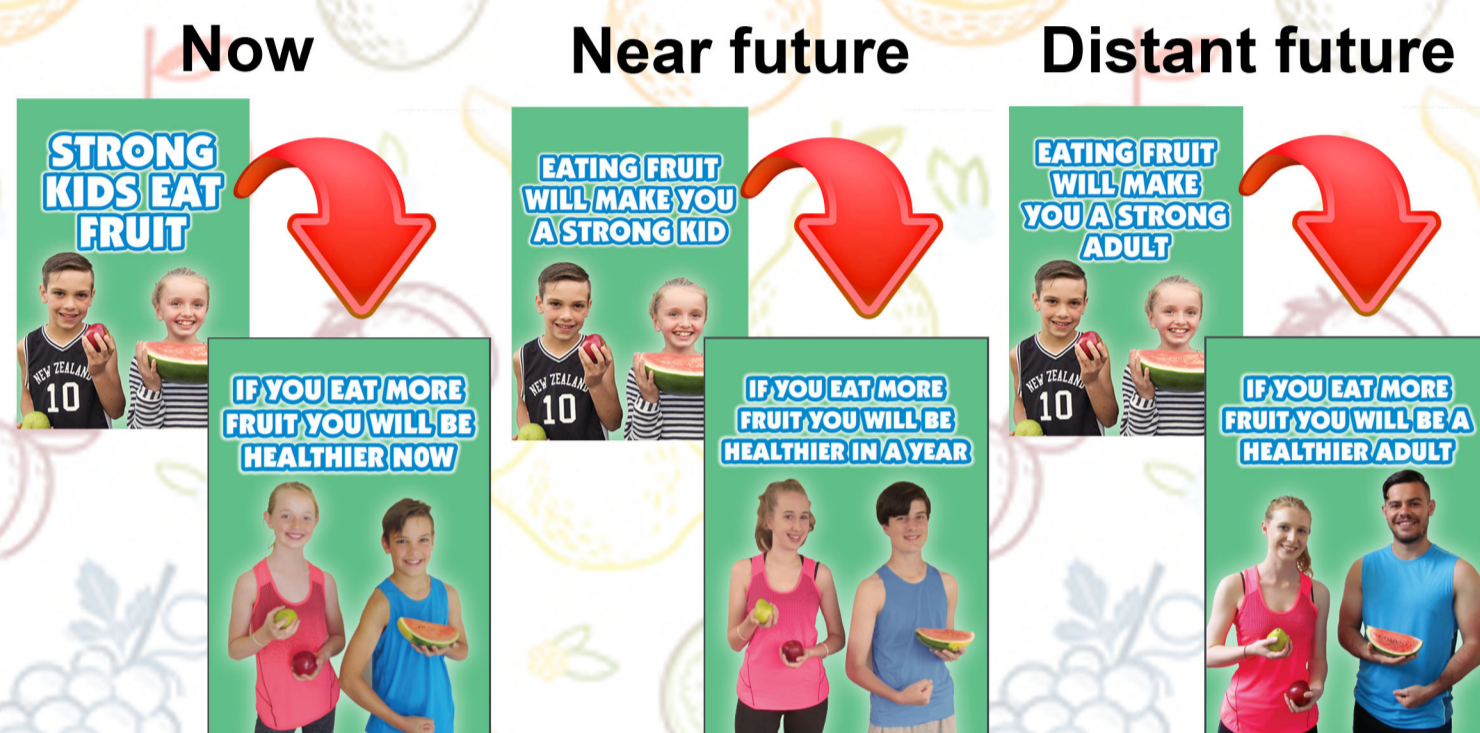
Introduction The aim of the project is to develop our understanding of what children are thinking when they see healthy food products being advertised, and to come up with effective ways of advertising to children to help them make healthy food choices. Specifically, we want to determine if the temporal distance of the message in the advertisement affected children's intentions to eat more fruit. We expect that children will report higher intentions to eat more fruit when the advertisement has a 'now' focus, as child development research suggests that children are temporally orientated to the present (Rhoedder John, 2008). The research findings will contribute to the theory regarding effective advertising to children and have the potential to provide practical guidelines to marketers and public policy related direction.

Survey Development The first step was to identify and collate scales that measure the constructs of interest. Once this was done we had to decide which of these scales were the most appropriate for use with children. We tested these scales on a representative pilot group who said that they understood some of the questions but not others. The scales that contained questions that the children did not understand were subsequently either modified or deleted. We also tested to see which scale format was the most appropriate, the majority of the children reported that they liked the smiley faced graphic slider the best, but thought the five-point likert scale was the easiest to use, so we decided to use a smiley faced likert scale in the final survey. We then tested the revised survey on the same pilot group. They confirmed that the survey was appropriate in terms of content and length.

Initial pre-test and exploratory study

We pretested the survey on two schools in the Wellington region. In total, 38 children aged 8-13 participated. We found that the 8 year olds were struggling to complete the survey, so we decided to change the sample to 9-13 year olds.

When we analysed the data from the initial pre-test we realised that the advertisement manipulation was not working as intended. We therefore decided to carry out an exploratory study to try and strengthen the manipulation. We conducted 2 focus groups, one with 6 boys aged 8-13 and the other with 4 girls aged 6-12. We asked the children questions about the 3 possible appeals that we were thinking of using: 'clever', 'healthy' and 'strong'. It was evident that they thought that both healthy and strong were suitable appeals to use but not clever. We then explored what they think healthy and strong looks like in the present, in a year's time and in adulthood by asking them to make collages. The children chose people that were similar to themselves to represent what healthy and strong looks like now. They also chose older people for what healthy looks in a year and in adulthood. From this we decided to change the advertisement (see advertisements below).



Pre-test We utilised a panel for the secondary pre-test. We decided to test both a 'strong' and 'healthy' appeal to see what worked best. In total there were six conditions: healthy now, healthy year, healthy adult, strong now, strong year and strong adult. 214 children aged 9-13 completed the survey, with approximately 30 children in each condition.

Pre-test Findings

Children were significantly more likely to believe that fruit made them healthy than strong. Thus, we decided to use healthy in the advertisement instead of strong (see advertisements above).

Children thought fruit makes you healthy most after viewing the HealthyNow advertisement and least after viewing the HealthyAdult advertisement. Fruit attitudes and fruit intentions were highest after seeing the HealthyNow advertisement. Both of these findings are in line with previous research findings (Rhoedder John, 2008)

Analysis of the manipulation checks indicated that the manipulation was working as intended. Reliability and factor analyses revealed that the scales were working as intended.

Next steps The survey instrument is now in its final format. The next stage in the project is to administer the survey and analyse the data to see if the research propositions are supported.

Reference Rhoedder John, D. (2008). Stages of consumer socialization. In C. P. Hugvedt, P. M. Herr, & F. R. Kardes (Eds.). Handbook of consumer psychology (pp 221-246). New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

