Chapter 12
Adolescents' Response to Food Marketing in Delhi, India

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Background

The majority of this book relays research specific to the effects of media and communication, generally, on *reducing* childhood obesity. This chapter considers, instead, how media—and food marketing practices in particular—might be increasing childhood obesity, or at least contributing to this epidemic (Harris, Pomeranz, Lobstein, Brownell, 2008), which is now growing on a global scale (Wang & Lobstein, 2006). The chapter reports the results of a study from Delhi, India. In large cities of India now, like Delhi, the prevalence of obesity among affluent adolescents is comparable to youth in other developed nations in the West, like the USA and the UK (Wang, Chen, Shaikh, & Mathur, 2009). Compared to other countries in the West, however, the negative health sequelae of obesity, like diabetes, occur a decade earlier in the life course (UK Prospective Diabetes Study, 1994) and at lower BMI values (Misra, 2003), suggesting the problem of obesity may ultimately prove more challenging to ameliorate in India, when compared to the West. This may be further complicated by the evolving landscape of food marketing across India, given the relatively recent entrance of multinational food corporations into this country and increasing aspiration for Western lifestyles among its citizens (Goddard, 2009), especially by youth (or "Youngistans") (Robinson, De Vera, & Witt, 2008).

Globally, food promotion and advertising is the most common type of marketing practices geared towards youth. A growing body of research from the West confirms that young people not only recall, enjoy, and engage with these marketing campaigns

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but also change their food preferences, purchasing behavior, and consumption as a result of them (Cairns, Angus, & Hastings, 2009, Hastings et al., 2006). Since most advertised foods contrast sharply with that recommended by public health professionals, this is cause for concern. To date, the majority of research on food marketing to young people has been conducted in developed countries like the USA and the UK (Cairns et al., 2009). Few studies from developing nations like India exist Hastings et al., 2006).

India's Food Industry and Food Marketing

India is the second largest producer of food worldwide, and its food processing industry is growing rapidly (IBEF, 2011), driven, in large part, by the entry of Western corporations like McDonalds into this market (Kulkarni, Lassar, Sridhar, & Venkitachalam, 2009). By 2015, the food industry in India is predicted to grow to $300 billion USD, up from $200 billion USD in 2007 (IBEF, 2011). Recently, increased trade liberalization has opened new, larger market opportunities for many multinational companies in this area of the world, including food companies (Goddard, 2009). "India is special in terms of existing opportunities and market potential," according to the Global CEO for Domino's Pizza (IBEF, 2011). These multinational companies are inspired by an economy in India that continues to grow (unlike many other countries worldwide at present) and large and increasing numbers of middle and upper class consumers, including young people (Goddard). Although estimates vary, more than 250 million people belong to the middle and upper classes in India (Tharoor, 2007), and these consumers are currently purchasing at a higher rate than most countries, worldwide (Saha, 2009). Although the Indian middle class is less affluent than middle classes in the West or China, the sheer size of this market may someday exceed the buying power of the American middle class. By 2030, India will be home to almost 20% of the world's population (Bijapurkar, 2007).

The extent of food marketing has increased in recent years in India (Nawathe, Gawande, & Dethe, 2007). From 2003 to 2005, for example, the money spent on marketing food to young people in India rose by more than 150% (Hawkes, 2007). By 2007, over 50% of the food industry's budget in India was spent on food marketing alone, compared to only 2% on research and development (Nawathe et al.). Further, the nature of food marketing in India is not unlike that in other parts of the world, such as the USA. Television advertising dominates food marketing in India and other parts of Asia, like it does in the USA and the UK (Escalante de Cruz, Phillips, Visch, & Bulan Saunders, 2004). In 2004, 40–50% of advertisements displayed during children's programming were about food (Escalante de Cruz et al.). For each hour of children's programming reviewed in this study, 15 min were devoted to advertising, overall (Escalante de Cruz et al.). At that time, Coca Cola, PepsiCo, Britannia, Parle, and Nestle sponsored the majority of food advertisements, promoting soft drinks, confectionary, and biscuits (i.e., cookies) (Escalante de Cruz et al.).

In 2010, Hindustan Unilever Ltd topped these charts, with the largest commercial volume, overall (Businessworld, 2010). This company originated in the UK and, in addition to home and personal care products, offers Knorr's soups and Wall's ice cream locally, as a leading food company in India (HUL, 2011).

Although the marketing strategies that these food companies employ in India and other parts of Asia are similar to those they use in developed countries (Robinson et al., 2008), their impact might be different, given the fast pace at which they are being implemented. Food advertising messages directed to youth stress fun, excitement, and taste, while messages to parents note health benefits (Hastings et al., 2006). However, the food products being promoted are mainly energy dense and nutrient poor, as they are high fat, salt, and sugar (HFSS) foods (Lobstein, Macmullan, McGrath, & Witt, 2008). Globally, the most commonly advertised food products are sugar-sweetened breakfast cereals, soft drinks, savory snacks, fast food, and confectionary—also known as the "Big Five" (Cairns et al., 2009). In India, ready-to-eat breakfast cereals are only beginning to emerge, so that they are not (yet) heavily advertised. However, the majority of food products that are currently marketed to younger consumers in India, like other parts of the world, are micro-nutrient poor and not in compliance with national dietary guidelines for Indians (National Institute of Nutrition, 2011); in fact, they are inversely related to them. The speed with which many multinational food companies and their marketing campaigns have arrived, executed, and prospered in India has been swift. For example, in 1997, only 5,172 min of soft drink advertisements aired on television. By 2000, this had risen to over 30,000 min—an increase of more than 500% (Escalante de Cruz et al., 2004). Though no more recent data could be found for comparison, it is likely that the extent of these advertisements has grown even further over a decade later, given the continued prominence of Coca-Cola and PepsiCo in the food and advertising sectors of India today.

Despite the increased pervasiveness of food marketing in India, few studies have evaluated how children and adolescents have responded to it. Only three such studies were identified in the most recent comprehensive reviews of this literature (Cairns et al., 2009; Hastings et al., 2006), and they were conducted over a decade ago. Two other more recent and relevant studies from India (Bhattacharyya & Kohli, 2007; Nawathe et al., 2007) and one of immigrants from India in the USA (Mahima & Puja, 2008) were identified in preparation for this chapter, but they focus on parent perspectives. Given the changes over the last decade, youth perspectives need to be considered, too.

"Youngistans" and "Westernization"

India is uniquely situated worldwide, with an especially large and potentially lucrative target market of youth. More than 400 million children and adolescents call this country home, which is 40% of India's current population and the most of any country worldwide (Youthreach, 2004). The youth segment in India will

continue to grow in coming years, such that over half of its population will remain under the age of 25 years (Bansal, 2004). By 2050, India will have the largest working age population, worldwide (Pant, 2008). Many multinational companies are attracted to this potential market, as these youth want to spend and have access to monies to do so (Goddard, 2009). This younger generation is referred to by many as Youngistans or Youngistans, being a blend of young and Hindustan, another name for India. Their image, in large part, has not only been created by the media (Sen, 2010) but is perpetuated by it (see PepsiCo's website for these youth, http://www.youngistaan.com/wow/p2/index.php) and will, no doubt, ultimately change the way many products are advertised (Sen).

Although young people may not yet have the purchasing power comparable to their Western counterparts, they are the center of the Indian family and, as such, can heavily influence purchasing decisions of parents, in addition to purchasing products on their own (Kaur & Singh, 2006). To date, most studies of their purchasing power have focused on the influence on the family, in regards to purchases for durable goods, like televisions, refrigerators, and cars (Kaur & Singh), though studies are beginning to emerge specific to food (e.g., Mahima & Puja, 2008). Regardless of product category, most of these purchases are geared towards consuming Western goods, as there is a strong desire—among the old and young alike (but, especially, among the young)—to emulate the West and its affluent lifestyle (Goddard, 2009). Western brands are status symbols in India and are increasingly available, given globalization of the Indian market.

Like many emerging economies, India is changing quickly. Globalization is changing the ways these young people live and the social environments in which they reside, in ways that affect their health (Beaglehole & Yach, 2003). Globalization refers to the increasing connectivity of our world and its cultures, driven by the exchange of ideas and goods, often through media outlets and marketing efforts (Tomlinson, 1999). According to Arnett (2002), adolescents can play a central role in globalization, as they are integrally involved in and affected by it. Compared to adults, adolescents are more receptive to novel ideas and new products and can be more exposed to different types of media, like television and the Internet. As a result, they can often be the target of specific marketing efforts increasingly focused on selling these "global brands" to "global teens," given similar patterns of consumption by urban youth worldwide (UNDP, 1998).

The majority of "global brands" originate in the West and include a variety of multinational food companies like Coca-Cola, Kellogg's, and Nestlé. Indeed, the most pervasive "global" influence in contemporary India is that of the West, especially that from the USA and the UK. McDonalds and Pizza Hut are prolific now, offering consumers vegetarian versions of their usual fare, like the Maharaja Mac (Pingali, 2007), to appeal to the Indian consumer. The growth of the Western-style fast-food industry in India has been phenomenal. Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut, for example, entered the Indian market with 1 restaurant in 1995. By 2003, there were 70 restaurants; by 2005, there were 127; and 1000 are planned for 2014 (India Franchise Blog, 2011). Thus, in this country, as in many others in Asia, globalization has become synonymous with "westernization." No studies of the effects

of food marketing to young people in India have considered this evolving and increasingly "westernized" landscape.

The purpose of this study is to document young adolescents' response to food marketing in contemporary India. In doing so, their recall of favorite food advertising is considered, in addition to their preferred characteristics of food marketing campaigns and perceived impact. The influence of "westernization" on their response is examined, too, so the literature that has already appeared from India can be updated in this way. Globally, few studies have considered the exposure to and effects of food advertising on adolescents, compared to the large body of research on children (Brownell, Schwartz, Puhl, Henderson, & Harris, 2009). Thus, this study extends the body of literature on this key developmental phase of life, as well. Adolescence is a critical period in the life course, since consumer socialization takes on new meaning (Kaur & Singh, 2006) and key health-related behaviors like eating are established during this time and ultimately track into adulthood (Kelder, Perry, Klepp, & Lytle, 1994).

Methods

Study Setting and Participants

This is a qualitative study, cross-sectional by design. Fifteen focus groups were conducted in five Private schools in Delhi, India, between September and December, 2009. A total of 151 students enrolled in 6th and 8th grades (10–14 years old) were recruited through purposive sampling and agreed to participate. In India, Private schools typically cater to families of middle to high socio-economic status (Sharma, 1999). English is the medium of instruction in these schools. Each focus group included 10–12 participants, with equal numbers of boys and girls present. Ethical clearances for the study were obtained from appropriate institutional review boards in India and the USA. Active parent consent and active student assent were required for study participation.

Data Collection and Interview Guide

Each focus group was led by one moderator, assisted by two note-takers. All field staff were trained by a social scientist in appropriate techniques (Mishra et al., 2005). At the start of each focus group, the moderator explained the purpose of and procedure for the discussion, followed by a short ice-breaker. Then, they facilitated the discussion, using an interview guide. Each discussion lasted about 60 min and was audio taped. Teachers were not present. All focus groups were conducted in English.

Table 12.1 Interview guide for focus groups—food marketing campaigns

1. Of all the advertising campaigns for food or drink, which one do you like the best? What is the product being advertised? How often have you seen this campaign?
2. Thinking about this campaign, where have you seen the ad? Who are the models in the ad? What are the models doing?
3. Thinking about this campaign, what is the main message of the campaign? What did you understand from this message?
4. Thinking about this campaign, is the ad in a local Indian language or in English? Which language should the ad be in? Would you say the ad is more "Indian" or more "Western" in flavor? Why? Which would you prefer?
5. Did this campaign make you feel like trying the product it advertised? If/when you tried the product, did it meet your expectations based on the advertising campaign? Would you recommend it to your friends/family?

Among other questions, the interview guide included queries specific to food marketing campaigns. Table 12.1 provides the list of questions used to guide discussion.

Data Coding and Analysis

Data analysis began concurrently with data collection. Each focus group was transcribed from the audiotapes by the note-takers on the same day the discussion was conducted. A detailed account of each discussion that included non-verbal cues and gestures was also prepared from notes. This was integrated with the detailed transcripts so that minute details of the focus groups were not missed. After all transcripts were ready, they were transferred to the US team where further analysis was done. At this stage, data were coded and organized into particular themes relevant to the research questions of interest. This was done with software for qualitative data analysis (NVivo 9; QSR International, 2011). Responses were organized by grade level and school type, to be able to detect and interpret differences, if any. Once analyzed, the results were returned to India, where they went through verification checks with field staff to ensure interpretations of student responses were reasonable and accurate.

Results

No differences in these responses were noted by grade level or school type. Therefore, results are presented in narrative and summative form, for all participants. Where appropriate, narratives are made more concrete with actual responses from student participants. These responses are *italicized* and "quoted" when they appear.

Exposure to Food Advertising

Students reported seeing food advertisements primarily on television, on both adult and children's television channels alike. They reported watching their favorite ad four to five times, daily. The frequency of advertisements during television shows did not go unnoticed. "*When we see any [half-hour] program [on TV], the program is only of 15–20 minutes. And if the program is of 1 hour, half an hour these channels spend on advertising to earn money. So that is a major problem.*" Although television was the main outlet for these food advertisements, students reported seeing advertisements for food in newspapers, magazines, billboards, and cinema halls. Students also reported watching them on the Internet, though this communication channel was least common.

Recall of Food Advertising

A large majority of these students were able to easily recall a favorite food advertisement. For most types of foods, their recall was strongly linked to particular brand names. This included advertisements for pre-sugared breakfast cereals (e.g., Kellogg's), soft drinks (e.g., Thums Up, Coca Cola), savory snacks (e.g., Kurkure), fast foods (e.g., McDonalds), and other types of processed foods (e.g., Maggi noodles). Although students could recall favorite advertisements for a variety of confectionary products (e.g., chocolates, cookies, ice cream), brand awareness was not as strong.

Overall, students remembered more advertisements for Western-style foods (e.g., pizza, burgers) than for Indian-style foods. Although students recalled favorite advertisements for Eastern-style foods (e.g., noodles) too, they recalled advertisements for a much wider variety of Western foods. Several students noted, "*Ninety percent of advertisements are for Western foods*"; "*We see more advertisements of chips, burgers, soft-drinks, pizzas*"; and "*No, they are not Indian foods. They are more Western foods. But now they are available in India, too.*" When asked about advertisements for Indian foods, only two were mentioned: "badam pista" (an energy powder added to milk, also called Complan) and "chayavanprash" (an ayurvedic paste used as an immune booster). Advertisements for Maggi noodles were the most popular Eastern-style food advertised, and one of the most popular campaigns, overall. Maggi is discussed further, below.

Students were cognizant that Western-style food was increasingly finding its way into the Indian subcontinent. "*It has been adopted from the Western culture because [parents] don't have time to prepare [Indian] foods for them or their children. Now-a-days, Western culture is coming to India; it results in consumption of [this kind] of food.*" Notably, when students discussed traditional Indian fare, they almost always referred to food types by name (e.g., roti, dal, idli). However, when students referred to Western foods, they mainly referred to brand names, not food types (e.g., 7Up, Lays, Pizza Hut). As well during interviews, some students named Western (e.g., macaroni, hot dogs) and Eastern (e.g., noodles, momos) food products as Indian, blurring demarcation in origin.

Western brand recognition was strongest in the fast food (e.g., McDonalds, Pizza Hut) and pre-sugared cereal (e.g., Kellogg's) categories, while Indian brand recognition was strongest in the savory snacks (e.g., Kurkure, a cheeto-like snack) and confectionary (e.g., Amul ice cream) categories. Western and Indian brands were equally endorsed in regards to beverages. All Western brands were for carbonated soft drinks (e.g., Coca Cola, Pepsi), except Tropicana juice. Indian brands included carbonated soft drinks (e.g., Limca), non-carbonated health drinks (e.g., Complan, Horlicks), and other types of non-carbonated drinks (e.g., Maaza). Adverts for Indian brand fruit juices were popular, too.

Favorite Characteristics of Food Advertising

Several characteristics of the advertising campaigns were especially appealing to these students. Most notably, the use of popular actors and actresses to advertise food products drew close attention from students. Students easily associated celebrity names with certain brand names of food: Aamir Khan with Coca-Cola, Juhi Chawla with Kurkure, Katrina Kaif with Slice, Javed Jaffery with Maggi ketchup, and Saif Ali Khan with Pepsi, among others. The impact of this technique seemed strong. "*If they [celebrities] are eating it, then we should also do it*." A good example of this advertising technique is the campaign for Thums Up, which was by far the most popular campaign reported by these students. Advertisements for this cola-flavored soft drink feature Akshay Kumar, a famous actor, whizzing through city streets, doing death-defying stunts to get to his Thums Up (e.g., see http://www.desihits.com/news/view/akshay-kumar-in-thums-up-cola-commercial-20100413; "If you want me, come and get me" commercial for 2010). Students discussed how celebrities were portrayed as being "*cool*," and that students, therefore, could be *"cool-er"* if they ate/drank the products being advertised. *"Through celebrities, they allure teenagers to buy these items and portray them as tasty and cool."*

The other most popular advertising campaign was for Maggi noodles. These commercials feature non-celebrity spokespersons, like parents and children, preparing and consuming them (e.g., http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uf67yrJ7y6Q&NR=1). Students were aware of and responded favorably to Maggi's slogan, "*taste bhi health bhi [provides both taste and health]*." They knew, too, that *"Maggi is quick to make (in 2 minutes)*." Taste, convenience, and health effects, therefore, were key messages in these commercials that students enjoyed. Like Maggi, advertising campaigns for other food products, like Complan and Horlicks, often resonated with students for their health claims, too—that their product was high in protein, or that it would make one strong.

Students preferred watching television commercials that were conveyed in Hindi, the national language of India. According to these students, about 80% of food advertisements are in Hindi, even when seen on Western television channels, like HBO or Star. *"[It should be in] Hindi, so it can be easily understood." "Because the language of the other country [English] and the language we speak [local English]*

is bit different. It is faster, and sometimes there are very tough English words we don't understand. We understand it only after [an advertisement] appears 4–5 times. It is difficult sometimes."

Students mentioned other characteristics of these food marketing campaigns that they enjoyed, though did so less often compared to the factors mentioned above. For instance, innovation was perceived as effective at getting the attention of children. As one 6th grader said, *"Children do not get attracted by masalas and all these [more traditional] things. Children already know about all this, they want to know about new things."* Offering toys as part of the campaign was also noted as a successful strategy. *"There is a gift in the packet which also attracts." "Sir, there is one ad of Boost [a health drink]. A flying saucer is given free with them. Sir, some students, they collect them."*

Impact of Food Advertising

These food promotion campaigns had an impact not only on students' attitudes towards a particular food but also on their food purchase and consumption behavior. Given that these were their most favorite campaigns, the students' attitude change was generally favorable towards the food. "*If we see interesting ads, then we think they [products] are good for us."* Students reported that these advertisements made them feel like they must purchase the food product. However, once they reflected on the advertisement, some students understood that the particular food might not be in their best interest. "*Sir, first we feel like buying it, but then afterwards we understand these are not healthy foods, so we should not buy it."* Other students reported purchasing food and drinks (e.g., Horlicks, Maggi, Coca-Cola) after watching these advertisements. Students also reported eating or drinking products, given the advertisements. One student noted, "*We like Akshay Kumar's advertisement for Thums Up on TV, so we buy and drink it*." Another said, *"After seeing the Maggi ad … we feel like eating Maggi—and I will eat it."*

The effects of the advertisements extended beyond the effects on the child. Many children reported further promoting food items to others such as family, friends, and peers if they have a pleasant experience with the product, after trying it. *"Yes, we do tell them if we like it. We tell them that it tastes nice and they should also get it."* Some students reported their parents would yield to their demands for certain food products, given "pester power," while others said their mothers would refuse to buy.

Discussion

The food marketing landscape in India appears to have undergone substantial changes in the last decade, when considered from the perspective of young people. The effect of globalization, or "westernization," seems strong and can change the

way that adolescents behave (Arnett, 2002). This study provides evidence to support that school-going youth in India engage with and enjoy food marketing initiatives that are geared towards Western products but are promoted in ways that are inherently Indian. The use of local language and local celebrities are especially effective strategies. This study suggests campaigns are changing food purchasing and consumption in Delhi, India, too.

Students recalled favorite advertisements in each of the “Big Five” frequently advertised categories of food—pre-sweetened breakfast cereals, soft drinks, savory snacks, confectionary, and fast food. Advertisements for noodles, which fall outside of the “Big Five,” were favorites, also. Compared to earlier studies in Maharashtra and Delhi, a wider range of products were represented here. Advertisements for soft drinks were especially preferred in past studies (Unnikrishnan & Bajpai, 1996; Vaipeyi, 2001), in addition to adverts for noodles and confectionary (e.g., biscuits, chocolate) (Radkar & Mundlay, 2001). In one of these past studies, children had higher levels of recall than parents for all products, except the noodles (Radkar & Mundlay). This, of course, cannot be directly compared here. Still, it is notable that, a decade later in Delhi, India, youth of the same age (10–14 years old) are reporting a larger repertoire of favorite food advertisements. It is unclear whether their exposure to these food advertisements has increased in breadth—or their receptivity to them has changed. Given the expansion of food marketing over the last decade, it may be a combination of both. Regardless, all of the food products recalled here, except fruit juices, were nutrient poor, energy dense.

Notably, youth recall of favorite advertisements was strongly linked to brand names. This is a departure from past research, where brand names for soft drinks, alone, were identified. In the late 1990’s, young adolescents were only aware of the “war” in advertising between Coca-Cola and PepsiCo (Vaipeyi, 2001), the two biggest soft-drink companies in India. Brand recognition in the present study extended across many food categories and was particularly strong for Western brands (e.g., McDonalds) and Western-style foods (e.g., pizza), although certain Indian brands (e.g., Thums Up) and Eastern-style foods (e.g., Maggi noodles) were prominent, as well. India appears to be geographically and metaphorically stuck in the middle between Western and Eastern food landscapes. The strongest influence at present seems to be from the West, as the large majority of advertisements are for Western-style foods and for Western brands. It is interesting to note that, for some students, the distinction between Western, Eastern, and Indian foods is increasingly blurred, as these new foods enter this market in India.

In earlier studies in India, young people were conscious of the use of celebrity endorsement to promote products (Vaipeyi, 2001). The use of this marketing strategy to promote food has expanded over time in developing countries (Cairns et al., 2009; Hastings et al., 2006). It appears to be an especially effective means for multinational companies to “think global, act local” (Vignali, 2001) in order to reach young audiences in India. In this study, youth readily associated numerous celebrity names with all kinds of food products. The majority of the celebrities that students named were actors or actresses in *Bollywood* movies. Famed sports persons were also referred to by students, but much less frequently. In prior market research,

PepsiCo's higher recognition status was attributed to its long-standing affiliation with cricket, a favorite past-time in India. Endorsement by famous cricketers and high visibility of products at cricket matches was more effective than Coca-Cola's big spend on television advertising (LODESTAR, 2002).

Though students were aware that not all food products being advertised were healthy, they still reported purchasing and consuming them. None of the prior studies from India documented changes in these children's behaviors (Radkar & Mundlay, 2001; Unnikrishnan & Bajpai, 1996; Vaipeyi, 2001), although parents reported in two studies that their children's demand for a particular food product substantially influenced their own buying decisions (Radkar & Mundlay, 2001; Vaipeyi, 2001). The potential strength of "pester power" is underscored from the child's perspective in this study. This study provides some evidence, too, that children are a potential vehicle for food promotion, in regards to reaching out to family and friends. Other studies corroborate that children in developing countries are targeted not only as potential consumers but also as critical bridgeheads into the wider society and local culture, facilitating the introduction of new or innovative products, like food (Arnett, 2002; Cairns et al., 2009; Hastings et al., 2006).

Parent perspectives were not considered in this study, but would be important, given that much of the purchasing power still lies within their domain, especially in India (Kaur & Singh, 2006). Traditionally, women (e.g., mothers, aunts, and grandmothers) were the sole food purchasers within an extended family structure that defined much of India. Today, extended joint families are being replaced more often by nuclear families, and these nuclear families are characterized by dual-career heads-of-household, where both the mother and father work. Increasingly, then, their children have become more influential in regards to purchasing decisions, which can be driven by food marketing campaigns (Kaur & Singh). Parents now actively seek out their child's opinions in this setting, because they are more knowledgeable of "brands, models, and the latest trends" (Kaur & Singh). "Pester power" may be taking on a new (less annoying) meaning in this setting, as parents are genuinely interested in their child's opinion on buying products, especially those from the West (Goddard, 2009). Alternatively, or in addition, parents in India may be more permissive in acquiescing to purchase requests, given their desire to provide a certain lifestyle for their children that their own parents could not afford for them. In a recent cross-cultural study of American parents and Indian parents, no significant differences between cultures were found in regards to children bringing in new information about packaged food products (Mahima & Puja, 2008). However, the influence of children on the actual buying decisions regarding the packaged food products was significantly higher among Indian parents than American parents (Mahima & Puja). These authors blame the "invasive marketing practices targeted at children" (p. 32, Mahima & Puja). Most Indian parents are aware of the changing food marketing landscape in India and their questionable practices geared towards children. In one study from India, 86% of parents felt the government should regulate food advertisements, 41% thought food marketing should be regulated during children's television programming, and 7% felt that any food advertisements directed

at children should be banned outright (Nawathe et al., 2007). In another study, 95% of parents believed that advertisers were doing a disservice to society and favored Government regulation of food advertisements. Unfortunately, little to no regulation exists in India.

In fact, there is little regulation in food marketing across Asia, despite the need for the same (Robinson et al., 2008). Self-regulation is common practice in this part of the world, even in the most recent update of laws from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (2010) (Vadehra, 2010; Vashishtha, 2010). Seven multinational food companies (Coca-Cola, General Mills, Kellogg's, Nestlé, Mars, PepsiCo, and Unilever) recently came together to pledge to change their food advertising to children, effective January 1, 2011 (see http://www.hul.co.in/Images/Signed%20India%20Pledge_tcm114-257148.pdf). As part of this pledge, they promised not to advertise their products to children under 12 years old (defined as advertising to media audiences with minimum 50% of children under 12 years), nor to advertise in primary schools. It is unclear what impact, if any, this will have on food promotion in India, or on children's consumption of these food products. Self-regulation in the USA has failed to achieve desired changes to marketing practices (see Chaps. 6, 7, and 8). As is clear in this study, the effects of food promotion extend beyond the age of 12 years, into at least early adolescence. Last year (in 2010), the World Health Organization (WHO) released a set of recommendations regarding the marketing of food and nonalcoholic beverages to children (WHO, 2010). In this global document, the first of its kind, WHO (and its 193 Member States) does consider the marketing of food and nonalcoholic beverages to children to be an international issue and a global phenomenon (WHO). A set of twelve different recommendations were made, to support the implementation and enforcement of policies in Member States to reduce the exposure to and effectiveness of food marketing geared towards children (WHO). Unfortunately, however, the age range for "children" was never made explicit, as was hoped, so that these recommendations would cover children and adolescents up to at least the age of 16 years (Robinson et al., 2008). Research shows that older adolescents are able to understand the marketing messages in relation to product pricing and possess the intellectual capacity to be more resistant to "persuasive advertising" (Brownell et al., 2009; Kaur & Singh, 2006). However, this ability to perceive the messages behind advertising of products does not negate adolescents' vulnerability (Brownell et al., 2009). This level of intellect and critical thinking among adolescents is clear to marketers who are therefore now driven to market messages to "de-activate" any potential resistance, so adolescents remain a target market (Eisenberg, McDowell, Berestein, Tsiantar, & Finan, 2002).

It is not yet clear what will happen in India, and whether adolescents will ultimately be protected by regulation, like children. Future studies should inform the development of national regulation specific to food marketing in India, since children and adolescents in the developing world may be more susceptible to influences of food marketing and promotion, compared to their counterparts in the Western world (Cairns et al., 2009).

This study focused only on urban, affluent school-going youth attending Private schools. Future studies should include less affluent youth, too. Marketing messages do not discriminate on the basis of income, and rich and poor youth alike have access to these messages, via television, in India. Across all of India, over 85% of households, or 229 million households, now have access to a television, and this is growing annually (TAM Annual Universe Update, 2011). Access to television (and even the electricity to run it) is not problematic for less affluent families in this setting. In Tamil Nadu (a state in southern India), the government was involved in a program to provide free color TVs to each household in its state (7.5 million), with the goal of ensuring every household has access to a television by the end of 2011 (National Portal Content Management Team, 2009). In practice, over 16 million televisions were distributed in this widely popular scheme, particularly to those living below the poverty line (The Hindu, 2011). Although this may have positive effects on some segments of society (e.g., improving the status of women in rural settings; Jensen & Oster, 2008), others may suffer because of it, instead. In India, 50% of advertising on children's television is for food (Escalante de Cruz et al., 2004). In addition to being nutrient poor and energy dense, advertised foods are typically inexpensive and as such are easily accessible to those of low socioeconomic status. Critics, therefore, are concerned that these advertised foods may become the regular diet of the less affluent, widening the nutrition gap that already exists in much of the developing world (Hawkes, 2006). This may be reinforced by globalization and the effects of westernization. Not all Indians are able to afford to be or appear as Western, though many still yearn to do so, especially in lower classes (Goddard, 2009). Compared to other durable goods, Western foods are available and easily accessible to those less affluent, making them highly desirable, with the potential for negative health outcomes.

This study was cross-sectional and qualitative, by design. Causality, of course, cannot be inferred. Prior research in the developed world finds modest, but consistent evidence for a causal link between food marketing and related behaviors (Cairns et al., 2009). The evidence is strongest for the link with food purchasing. Prior reviews of this literature suggest these findings can be extrapolated to developing countries, since the marketing activity here mirrors that in the developed world (Cairns et al.). Future, more sophisticated studies shall be required to confirm this hypothesis in developing country contexts like India. As India faces its nutrition transition, a more westernized diet is emerging, driven in large part by the aggressive food marketing campaigns that India experienced a tremendous increase in over the last decade. This new diet can be characterized as having higher fat, sugar, and salt content than before. In a country like India, which faces a large double burden of under- and overnutrition, the problem can easily be seen to explode in the next decade, with additional micronutrient deficiencies that affect both children and adolescents (Hu, 2008; Ramachandran, 2006). The need for additional research—and especially intervention—is critical in this part of the world.

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