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**The Effectiveness of using Cartoon Spokescharacters on  
Restaurant Menus as Nudges to promote Healthier Food  
Choices among Children: a qualitative analysis.**

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**TITLE:**

**The effectiveness of using cartoon spokescharacters on restaurant menus as nudges to promote healthier food choices among children: a qualitative analysis.**

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## **SUMMARY.**

Childhood obesity is a global concern, with millions of children under five being overweight or obese. Italy, historically having lower rates, is also experiencing an alarming increase, with over 20% of children aged 5 to 19 being overweight and nearly 10% obese in 2020, a significant rise from the 1990s. The factors contributing to this trend include unhealthy diets, sedentary lifestyles, urbanization, and changing family dynamics. Various public health initiatives, like menu labeling and nutrition education, have been implemented but haven't fully solved the issue.

As traditional approaches have had limited success, alternative strategies like "nudging" are being explored. Nudging involves subtle changes in the environment to encourage healthier choices, such as using cartoon characters on restaurant menus. Cartoons are influential, but their effectiveness in promoting healthier choices on menus has not been extensively studied.

A study conducted by Ogle et al. (2010) on the impact of using licensed media characters on food and beverage packages to influence children's preferences – which inspired this research - found that children were more likely to choose products with popular cartoon characters on the packaging, but it didn't explore their impact on restaurant menus. This research project aims to investigate the effectiveness of using cartoon spokespersons on restaurant menus to promote healthier choices among children. It will analyze the spokescharacters on restaurant menus and their impact on children's preferences and choices, contributing to evidence-based interventions against pediatric obesity.

The study's significance extends to various stakeholders, including food and beverage companies looking to guide children's consumption behavior and address pediatric obesity. It emphasizes that such strategies can improve a company's image within local communities and contribute to public health efforts. Furthermore, the research findings can inform public policies and regulations targeting marketing techniques aimed at children.

Academically, the research project wants to expand the understanding of the effectiveness of nudges in promoting healthier food choices among children, conducting a qualitative content analysis and contributing to the fields of nutrition, marketing, and child psychology providing a different point of view on the matter: not directly observing children, who meet “fatigue over time” making experiments less accurate, but interviewing and collecting insights from professionals and common people experienced with children. Additionally, this research method

highlights the importance of designing interviews that encourage a more thorough exploration of children's decision-making processes and the impact of visual cues on their behaviors.

To achieve this goal, the research has the following objectives:

- Conduct interviews with experts and professionals who have observed children in their everyday lives and decision-making processes, using a behavioral intervention as a starting point for discussion.
- Explore the effectiveness of "cartoonized" spokescharacters as nudges by gathering qualitative data through interviews, allowing for a deeper understanding of children's decision-making processes in the context of menus with spokescharacters.
- Analyze the collected data to identify patterns, themes, and commonalities in the observations and opinions of the interviewed experts and professionals.
- Provide recommendations and implications based on the findings to inform stakeholders, including food and beverage companies, policymakers, and marketers, about the potential of using "cartoonized" spokescharacters as nudges.

An accurate literature review conducted to inform this research discusses the importance of marketing and advertising services, with a focus on the use of spokespersons, including celebrities, employees, customers, and spokescharacters. It highlights the challenges and benefits associated with different types of spokespersons in advertising.

1. **Spokespersons in Advertising:** The passage emphasizes the role of spokespersons in advertising to differentiate services and build brand recognition. Spokespersons can use various strategies to promote a service, such as highlighting its benefits, presenting facts, or leveraging their credibility.
2. **Effectiveness of Spokespersons:** The effectiveness of spokespersons depends on their credibility, expertise, attractiveness, and similarity to the target audience. Source credibility plays a significant role in persuading the audience, and this credibility is based on trustworthiness, expertise, and likability.
3. **Types of Spokespersons:** The passage discusses four main categories of spokespersons commonly used in service advertising: celebrities, employees, customers, and spokescharacters.

4. **Trade Characters:** Trade characters are fictional, animated beings used in advertising to create product identification, promote brand personality, and provide promotional continuity. They help establish a unique brand identity and connect with consumers.
5. **Interplay between Service Type and Spokesperson:** The effectiveness of spokescharacters in advertising depends on the type of service being promoted, whether it is hedonic or utilitarian. The use of spokescharacters can create emotional connections and enhance consumer engagement.
6. **Integrated Elements in Promotional Campaigns:** To influence consumer behavior and drive purchases, advertisers can incorporate integrated elements in their campaigns, including spokescharacters.

The significance of spokespersons in advertising services and their potential to influence consumer behavior and brand recognition, depending on the type of service and the characteristics of the spokesperson, is highlighted.

Moreover, the review provides a useful discussion about the concept of nudge and its application in various domains, with a particular focus on children's food choices. The concept of "Nudge" gained prominence with the publication of the book "Nudge" by Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein in 2008 it has since been applied in politics, economics, and development sectors, with the establishment of Nudge Units at various levels of government and international organizations. Nudges involve making subtle alterations in the presentation of options to influence people's behavior without forbidding choices or significantly changing economic consequences. The tool is meant to guide individuals toward making more appropriate decisions. It relies on choice architecture to alter behavior predictably; it is cost-effective and does not eliminate options but makes the desired choice more appealing.

Nudging effectiveness depends on factors like the practicality and cost-effectiveness of enforcement, the importance of preserving freedom of choice, potential market responses, and considering both short-term and long-term impacts.

Nudges act on the cognitive biases that can affect children's decision-making, such as confirmation bias, availability bias, and self-serving bias; and the use of spokescharacters as tools for captivating their attention and influencing their decision making exploits their bias of Mere Exposure Effect, which is the tendency for people to develop a preference for things they are familiar with. It can influence preferences and choices, including those related to spokescharacters in advertising. Indeed, spokescharacters, frequently used in advertising, create

familiarity and preference, especially among children. However, children are also affected by Gender Bias and Stereotyping, which categorize and prefer certain characteristics, roles, and behaviors based on gender and influence bias children's preferences for toys and cartoons, which may limit the effectiveness of the intervention.

In general, the effectiveness of nudges can depend on various factors, including context, target population, and the specific type of nudge used. For this reason, some critiques of Nudging show concerns about its ability to produce lasting behavior change, assumptions of irrationality, and potential paternalism. These critiques emphasize the need for further research and evaluation of nudging interventions, but what is scientifically known is that children are the easiest human beings to shape towards an habit.

Anyway, research indicates that the use of cartoonized spokescharacters in food marketing can positively influence children's food preferences and encourage healthier choices among them. Media characters can capture children's attention make healthier food options more appealing and have a greater impact on younger children, highlighting the importance of targeting specific age groups.

Children associate licensed characters with positive emotions, which can influence their taste perceptions and preferences for food items featuring these characters. At the same time, there are some concerns about the potential negative impact of licensed characters on junk food packaging, as they can increase positive taste perceptions and preferences for unhealthy foods. For this reason, the complex interplay between children's food preferences, food marketing, nudging, and the use of spokescharacters in shaping their eating habits emphasizes the importance of ethical and responsible marketing practices to promote healthier choices among children.

In particular, children's menus in restaurants are identified as a promising setting for promoting healthier food choices for children. Point-of-purchase interventions, such as menu labeling, are suggested as effective methods to encourage healthier choices. Some studies aimed to optimize a children's menu using nudging and boosting techniques through a modified menu design; this intervention did not significantly impact customer choices, but it emphasized the importance of understanding psychological decision-making processes in restaurant contexts.

Child-friendly menu labeling, including descriptive names and colorful symbols, is found to be effective in promoting healthier food choices among children and incorporating spokescharacters into child-friendly menu labeling can make healthy food options more appealing to children. Thus, visual cues on menus and the use of cartoon characters are identified as effective strategies

for encouraging healthier food choices among children; more specifically, younger children (ages 3-6) tend to be more influenced by these strategies than older children (ages 7-10).

The current study wants to exploit the existing research gap since while extensive research exists on the effectiveness of spokescharacters in food marketing, there is a lack of studies specifically examining the impact of spokescharacters on children's menus in restaurants and chooses the narrative based as theoretical framework, which employs storytelling and narratives as central elements in understanding and explaining phenomena.

Narratives are seen as essential tools for conveying knowledge and insight, offering depth and context that traditional analytical approaches might miss, they help individuals make sense of complex information and experiences by weaving them into coherent and meaningful stories, they bridge the gap between lived experiences and shared understanding. Moreover, narratives comprise structural elements like characters, plotlines, settings, conflicts, and resolutions: these elements create engaging and relatable stories that convey information and evoke emotions. They are situated within cultural, social, historical, and personal contexts, adding layers of meaning and capturing multiple perspectives and viewpoints, acknowledging the subjectivity inherent in storytelling.

Considering the choice of the framework, this research gathers narratives through methods like in-depth interviews, written testimonials, or analysis of visual media. Analysis involves coding, thematic analysis, and interpretation to uncover underlying themes and patterns.

In particular, qualitative data was collected using the ZMET (Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique) method: the study involved participants evaluating the effectiveness of a graphical behavioral intervention featuring a superhero spokescharacter on a restaurant menu as a behavioral nudge to encourage healthier food choices. Participants in the ZMET interviews have been selected through the Lens Model of Judgment, a psychological framework developed by Egon Brunswik to explain how individuals make judgments and decisions when they have incomplete or ambiguous information since we are analyzing a behavioral phenomenon without any quantitative data but using expertise and experience as a research foundation. The model emphasizes the importance of understanding the relationship between environmental cues and the inferences people draw from those cues.

Key points about the Lens Model of Judgment:

1. **Judgments and Cues:** The model suggests that judgments are formed by evaluating multiple cues associated with a target or outcome. These cues can be observed directly or inferred, and they vary in reliability.

2. **Cue Validity and Utilization:** The model introduces the concepts of "cue validity" (how well a cue predicts the target) and "cue utilization" (how important a cue is). Individuals weigh cues differently based on their validity and utilization.

Right after, the study also touches on the concept of intuition in expert judgments. Experts often make quick judgments based on years of experience, and these judgments are influenced by complex patterns of cue interrelationships. However, judgment machines, or mathematical models coming from the experts themselves can sometimes outperform human judgments in consistency and accuracy, especially when dealing with complex tasks. This point will be proved also when interpreting the results of the analysis conducted,

As already anticipated, the study employs the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) as a qualitative research method. ZMET is a unique approach designed to delve into participants' subconscious perceptions and emotions by exploring their metaphors and visualizations related to the research topic. It goes beyond surface-level responses, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of participants' perspectives and experiences. The research process followed these steps:

1. **Data Collection and Analysis:** The study systematically collected and analyzed unstructured data from participants, including textual responses and visual/sensory imagery.
2. **Pattern Identification:** Researchers carefully examined the data to identify recurring patterns and themes, extracting meaningful insights from the responses.
3. **Conclusive Findings:** Conclusions were drawn based on the identified patterns and thorough data analysis, contributing to a deeper understanding of the research topic.

In conclusion, the effectiveness of using "cartoonized" spokescharacters on restaurant menus as nudges to influence children's food choices towards healthier options was explored through an integrated analysis of data coming from existing literature and from in-depth interviews. The following key points emerged:

- **Role of Spokespersons:** literature highlights the significant role of spokespersons in conveying a service's message to the public. Spokespersons can shape how individuals perceive and interact with a product or service.
- **Types of Spokespersons:** along with the various types of spokespeople discussed, "spokescharacters" are introduced as fictional animated beings used for promotional



purposes. They offer benefits such as consistency and control over the message, which can be particularly appealing to children.

- **Leveraging Cognitive Biases:** literature mentions cognitive biases, including the "mere-exposure effect" or familiarity bias. Spokescharacters can leverage this bias by creating a sense of familiarity and preference among children, making healthier options more appealing.
- **Influence on Preferences:** research suggests that media characters, including cartoon characters, can influence taste perceptions and snack choices among children. Familiar and likable characters can create positive associations with food products.
- **Age and Decision-Making:** it is acknowledged that the impact of menu modifications and the use of cartoon characters can vary based on children's age, with younger children being more influenced. This suggests that using spokescharacters may be particularly effective for younger diners.
- **Effective Nudging Techniques:** the use of cartoon characters aligns with the principles of nudging in making desired choices more appealing and guiding individuals toward better decisions.

However, a deeper analysis of the interviews and scientific literature reveals that the effectiveness of cartoonized spokescharacters as nudges is contingent on several factors:

- **Age-Dependent Effectiveness:** Younger children tend to be more influenced by characters, while older children may be more influenced by real-life figures.
- **Tailoring to Gender and Personal Preferences:** Characters and themes should align with children's interests and gender preferences to reach a broader audience.
- **Multisensory Experience:** Engaging children's senses (sight, smell, taste) and emotions is crucial to making healthier options more appealing.
- **Play and Imagination:** Incorporating elements of play, sharing, and imaginative experiences enhances the effectiveness of menu strategies.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Rewards or surprises included in menus can further encourage healthier choices.

To sum up, the use of cartoonized spokescharacters on restaurant menus can be effective in influencing children's food choices and preferences, but it must be combined with complementary elements to create a holistic strategy. This includes engaging children's senses and emotions, tailoring menus to different age groups and gender preferences, and providing multisensory, imaginative, and socially interactive experiences. The study also highlights the human capacity

for judgment, which, when using all available cues, aligns with the study's findings that spokescharacters alone are not sufficient to drive healthier food choices in children.

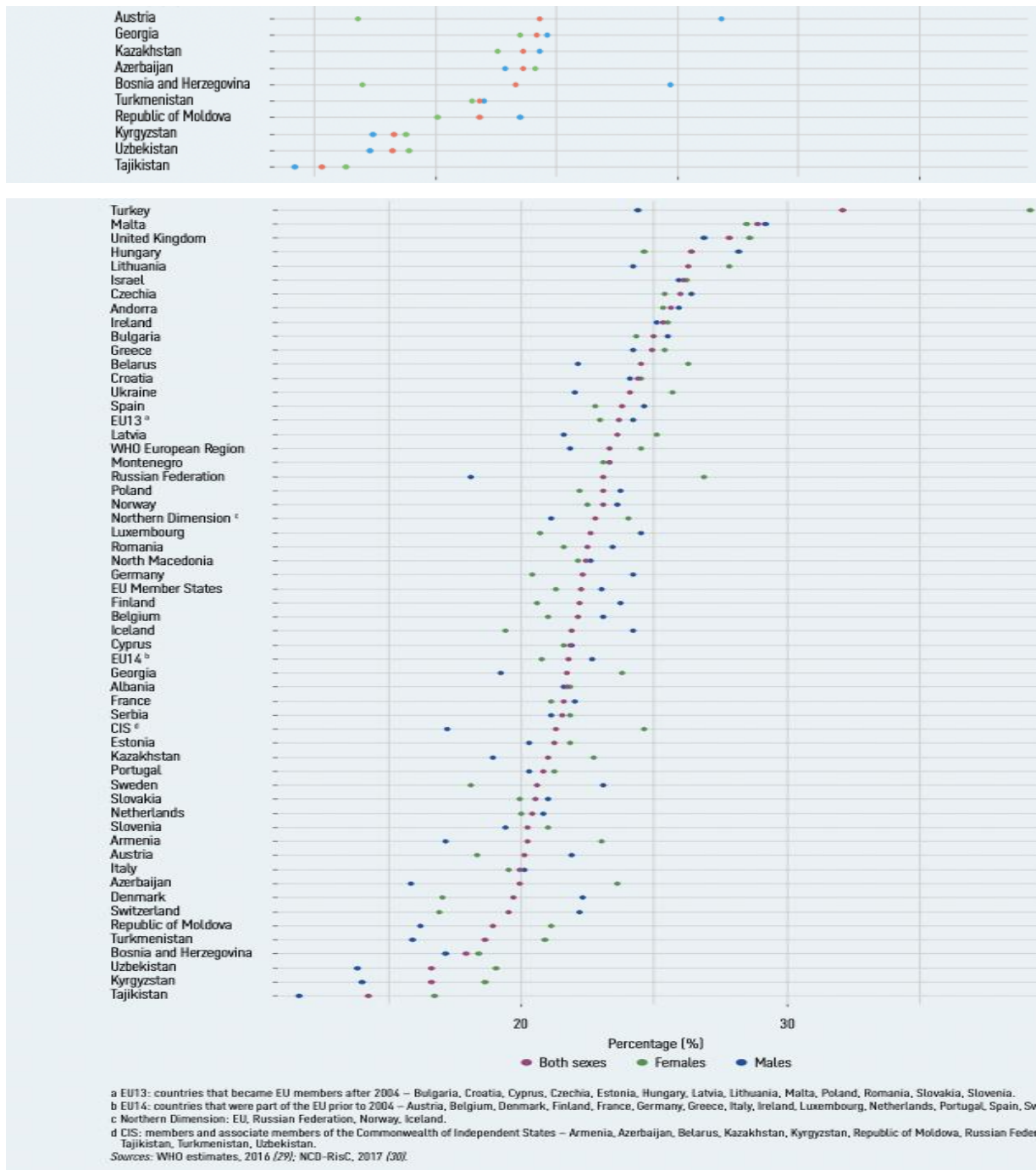
# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 - Background of the phenomenon.

Childhood obesity has become a significant public health concern worldwide, with an estimated 42 million children under the age of five being overweight or obese (World Health Organization, 2022). This alarming trend has serious implications for children's long-term health and well-being, as overweight and obese individuals are at a higher risk of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and certain types of cancer.

In the context of Italy, the country has historically maintained relatively lower rates of pediatric obesity compared to its European counterparts. However, this does not diminish the fact that Italy is also experiencing a steady increase in the prevalence of overweight and obesity among children. The current statistics reveal a concerning picture, with 20.3% of Italian children aged 5 to 19 being classified as overweight and 9.5% as obese in 2020. These figures represent a significant rise compared to the early 1990s when the rates were less than half of what they are today.





Understanding the factors contributing to this upward trend is crucial for addressing the issue effectively. Unhealthy eating habits and sedentary lifestyles are widely recognized as primary drivers of the obesity epidemic. Modern lifestyles, characterized by convenience-driven food choices, increased consumption of processed foods high in added sugars and unhealthy fats, and decreased physical activity levels, have played a significant role in shaping children's dietary patterns. Furthermore, the impact of urbanization and changes in family dynamics, such as dual-income households and time constraints, have also influenced children's food choices, leading to an increased reliance on fast food, pre-packaged meals, and sugary beverages.

To combat the growing problem of childhood obesity, various public health campaigns and interventions have been implemented in Italy and around the world. Menu labeling, for instance, aims to provide consumers with information about the nutritional content of menu items to facilitate informed choices. School-based nutrition education programs seek to promote healthier eating habits and increase awareness among children about the importance of a balanced diet. Additionally, initiatives focusing on the promotion of fruits and vegetables aim to increase their consumption and make them more appealing to children. While these interventions have shown some positive effects, they have not been able to fully address the complex and multifaceted nature of the problem.

In light of the limited success of traditional approaches, alternative strategies that can effectively influence children's food choices are being explored. One such strategy is the concept of "nudging," which has gained significant attention in recent years. Nudges are subtle changes to the choice architecture that can steer individuals towards healthier decisions without imposing mandates or removing freedom of choice. The use of cartoonized spokespersons on restaurant menus is one specific nudge technique that has shown promise in influencing children's food choices when dining out.

Cartoon characters have long been recognized as powerful influencers of children's preferences and behaviors. Advertisers and food companies have harnessed this influence by employing media characters to promote unhealthy food and beverage products. Research has consistently shown that children are highly responsive to marketing messages delivered through media characters found in various forms of media, including television shows, movies, and video games. These characters have the ability to capture children's attention, create positive associations, and influence their preferences and consumption patterns. However, limited research exists on the effectiveness of using cartoon spokespersons specifically on restaurant menus to promote healthier food choices.

One study that sheds light on this phenomenon is the research conducted by Ogle et al. (2010), titled "Influence of Cartoon Media Characters on Children's Attention to and Preference for Food and Beverage Products." This study examined the impact of licensed media characters on children's attention and preference for food and beverage products. The findings revealed that children were more likely to choose food products featuring popular cartoon characters on the packaging, indicating the influential role of these characters in shaping children's food choices. However, it is important to note that the study did not specifically investigate the effectiveness of using cartoon spokespersons on restaurant menus as a nudge for promoting healthier food choices among children, which is the focus of the present thesis project.

Given the potential of nudges to influence food choices and the widespread use of media characters in marketing, the use of cartoon spokespersons on restaurant menus holds promise as a strategy for promoting healthier food choices among children. This approach capitalizes on children's natural affinity for animated characters and leverages their influence to guide them toward selecting more nutritious options while dining out.

This research project aims to investigate the effectiveness of using cartoonized spokespersons on restaurant menus as a nudge to promote healthier food choices among children. By conducting a qualitative content analysis of restaurant menus featuring cartoon spokespersons and using intuition as a method for analyzing the data, this study seeks to provide insights into the characteristics and effectiveness of these nudges. Understanding how these cartoonized spokespersons can capture children's attention, influence their preferences, and ultimately drive them to make healthier food choices will contribute to the development of evidence-based interventions for preventing pediatric obesity.

Furthermore, this research project has practical implications for food and beverage-selling companies and the communities in which they operate. By identifying effective strategies for directing children's consumption behavior, companies can align their production and marketing efforts to promote healthier choices. This not only addresses a significant public health concern but also allows companies to build a positive image within their local communities, demonstrating their commitment to the health and well-being of community members.

In conclusion, childhood obesity is a pressing public health issue, and addressing it requires innovative approaches that can positively influence children's food choices. The use of nudges, such as cartoonized spokespersons on restaurant menus, presents an intriguing opportunity to promote healthier eating habits among children. By investigating the effectiveness of this nudge technique through a qualitative content analysis, this research project aims to contribute valuable insights to the field of public health and offer evidence-based recommendations for promoting healthier food choices among children. Ultimately, the goal is to mitigate the rising rates of childhood obesity and improve the long-term health outcomes of the younger generation.

## **1.2 – Practical relevance of the research.**

The research project I plan to pursue draws inspiration from the study conducted by Ogle, Andrew D., Dan J. Graham, Rachel G. Lucas-Thompson, and Christina A. Roberto and presented in the paper "Influence of Cartoon Media Characters on Children's Attention to and Preference for Food and Beverage Products" in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. This study

investigated the impact of incorporating licensed media characters on healthy food and beverage packages to capture children's attention and influence their preference for these products. By building upon their findings, my research aims to delve further into the effectiveness of using "cartoonized" spokespeople on restaurant menus as nudges to promote healthier food choices among children.

The phenomenon analyzed by the aforementioned researchers holds tremendous interest for a diverse range of stakeholders, particularly food and beverage-selling companies. The need to explore effective solutions for guiding children's consumption behaviors arises from a significant medical concern—pediatric obesity resulting from the over-consumption of unhealthy foods and beverages. This problem not only poses immediate health risks for children but also has long-term implications for their well-being and quality of life. Consequently, the results obtained from the demonstration of the hypotheses presented in Ogle et al.'s study and the general analysis of influencing children's decisions through tactics like the use of "cartoonized" spokespeople are invaluable in shaping managerial strategies in the production and sale of food and beverages.

By incorporating "cartoonized" spokespeople on restaurant menus, companies have the potential to influence children's decisions and steer them toward healthier food options. The visual appeal and familiarity associated with cartoon characters can capture children's attention and positively impact their preferences. This strategy serves as a form of nudge, leveraging the persuasive power of iconic characters to encourage healthier food choices. The practical relevance of this research lies in its potential to empower food and beverage companies with evidence-based strategies for promoting healthier eating habits among children.

Moreover, the outcomes of this research extend beyond the realm of business interests. Food and beverage companies have a responsibility to care for the well-being of their local communities. By actively engaging in efforts to combat childhood obesity and promote healthier food choices, these organizations can foster a positive image among community members. Embracing the findings from this research allows companies to position themselves as socially responsible entities that prioritize the health and safety of their consumers, particularly children. By aligning their marketing strategies and menus with health-promoting initiatives, companies can demonstrate their commitment to the well-being of the communities they serve.

The practical relevance of this research becomes evident in the broader societal context as well. Childhood obesity is a public health crisis that requires collective action from various stakeholders. The findings from this research can contribute to the development of evidence-based interventions and policy recommendations aimed at addressing this issue. By shedding light on the effectiveness of using "cartoonized" spokespeople on restaurant menus as nudges for

healthier food choices, this research has the potential to inform public health initiatives, educational campaigns, and regulatory measures.

In conclusion, the research project at hand is driven by the influential study conducted by Ogle et al. on the influence of licensed media characters on children's attention and preference for food and beverage products. The results and general analysis of influencing children's decisions through tactics like the use of "cartoonized" spokespeople hold practical significance for food and beverage-selling companies, providing valuable insights for defining managerial directions in the production and sale of food and beverages. Furthermore, these findings enable companies to cultivate a positive image within their local communities by actively promoting healthier food choices among children and demonstrating their commitment to combating pediatric obesity. The broader societal implications of this research highlight its potential to contribute to public health initiatives and educational campaigns. By leveraging the power of "cartoonized" spokespeople on restaurant menus, companies can play an instrumental role in shaping children's dietary habits and fostering a culture of health-consciousness.

Furthermore, the practical relevance of this research lies in its potential to inform public policies and regulations. Governments and regulatory bodies can utilize the findings to develop guidelines and restrictions on the use of marketing techniques targeting children. By understanding the influence of "cartoonized" spokespeople on children's food choices, policymakers can implement measures that encourage the promotion of healthier options while limiting the promotion of unhealthy products. This research provides empirical evidence that can aid in crafting effective policies to safeguard children's health and well-being.

Additionally, this research contributes to the academic and scientific community by expanding our understanding of the effectiveness of nudges in promoting healthier food choices among children. By conducting a qualitative content analysis, this research project adds to the existing body of knowledge in the fields of nutrition, marketing, and child psychology. The insights gained from this study can serve as a foundation for further research and exploration in related areas, ultimately advancing our understanding of how to address the complex issue of childhood obesity.

In conclusion, the practical relevance of the proposed research on the effectiveness of using "cartoonized" spokespeople on restaurant menus as nudges to promote healthier food choices among children is multi-faceted. It provides valuable insights for food and beverage-selling companies, enabling them to develop evidence-based strategies to encourage healthier eating habits. Moreover, it allows these companies to build positive community images by showcasing their commitment to promoting the health and well-being of their consumers. The research findings also have broader implications for public health initiatives, policy development, and



academic advancements. By shedding light on the influence of "cartoonized" spokespeople on children's food choices, this research aims to contribute to the collective efforts to address childhood obesity and fostering a healthier future for our younger generations.

### **1.3 – Research question and objectives.**

The research project aims to explore the influence of using "cartoonized" spokescharacters on restaurant menus as nudges on children's food choices and preferences towards healthier options. Inspired by the limitations identified in the study conducted by Ogle and his collaborators, one particular limitation that stood out was the potential for "fatigue over time" among children, resulting in less thoughtful responses. This observation has influenced the design of the present research to mitigate this issue and provide a different perspective. Therefore, this research seeks to address the following research question: "How effective is the use of 'cartoonized' spokescharacters on restaurant menus as nudges to influence children's food choices and preferences towards healthier options?"

To achieve this research goal, the following specific objectives will be pursued:

- I. Conduct interviews with experts and professionals who have observed and studied children in their everyday lives and decision-making processes. The interviews were structured around a behavioral intervention designed by the researcher, which provided a starting point for discussion. By incorporating this intervention, the research aimed to prompt interviewees to expand their argumentation and provide deeper insights beyond mere observations of the modified menu.
- II. Explore the effectiveness of "cartoonized" spokescharacters as nudges by gathering qualitative data through interviews. Professionals and experts were asked to share their observations, experiences, and thoughts on the behavioral intervention and its impact on children's food choices. The interviews allowed for a rich exploration of the nuances and complexities of children's decision-making processes in the context of restaurant menus featuring spokescharacters.
- III. Analyze the gathered data to identify patterns, themes, and commonalities in the observations, opinions, and additional insights provided by the interviewed experts and professionals. By starting with the behavioral intervention and expanding the discussion, the research aimed to capture a comprehensive understanding of the influence of "cartoonized" spokescharacters as nudges on children's food choices and preferences.
- IV. Provide recommendations and implications based on the findings to inform stakeholders, including food and beverage companies, policymakers, and marketers, about the potential of "cartoonized" spokescharacters as nudges. The recommendations will emphasize the importance

of incorporating behavioral interventions in research design to stimulate in-depth insights and encourage a more thorough exploration of children's decision-making processes.

By adopting a qualitative approach that incorporates a behavioral intervention in the interviews, this research project intended to uncover nuanced insights into the influence of "cartoonized" spokescharacters on restaurant menus as nudges on children's food choices and preferences. The interviews allowed for a more dynamic and interactive exploration of the topic, going beyond surface-level observations. The findings of this study will contribute to the existing literature and offer practical guidance for leveraging "cartoonized" spokescharacters as effective nudges in promoting healthier food choices among children. Furthermore, the research highlights the significance of designing interviews that go beyond passive observations, enabling a deeper understanding of children's decision-making processes and the potential impact of visual cues on their behaviors.

#### **1.4 – Overview of the thesis structure.**

This thesis is a comprehensive exploration of the use of created spokescharacters in the marketing and advertising service sector, with a particular focus on their role in nudging and cognitive biases. The structure of the thesis is as follows:

##### **Chapter 1: Introduction.**

In this opening chapter, we set the stage by discussing the background of the phenomenon, emphasizing the practical relevance of our research. We outline the central research question and objectives that guide our study and provide an overview of the thesis structure.

##### **Chapter 2: Literature Review.**

This chapter delves into the theoretical foundation of our research. We examine the significance of created spokescharacters in the marketing and advertising service sector. Furthermore, we explore the concepts of nudging and cognitive biases and their relevance to our study. A subsection focuses on the use of cartoonized spokespersons as a nudging strategy in food marketing, particularly targeting children. Ethical considerations in research on children are also addressed.

##### **Chapter 3: The Study.**

In this chapter, we detail the methodological aspects of our research. We present the theoretical framework, research design, and our chosen approach. We describe the Lens Model of Judgments as the basis for participant selection and explain our data collection method, which involves

qualitative research using the ZMET Method. Additionally, we elucidate the data analysis method, which consists of content analysis through coding.

#### **Chapter 4: Results, Discussion & Conclusion**

This pivotal chapter presents the results of our study, followed by a comprehensive discussion of those results within the context of the literature reviewed. We draw conclusions based on our findings, highlighting their significance and implications. We also acknowledge any limitations encountered during the study and propose potential directions for future research.

#### **Appendices & References**

The thesis concludes with appendices containing supplementary materials and a meticulously compiled list of references.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 - The role of created spokescharacters in the marketing & advertising service sector.**

Having a comprehensive grasp of marketing and advertising services is essential for maintaining a state's economic expansion and ensuring the durability of services in the long term. The primary obstacle advertisers face is establishing a clear distinction between one service and another, which can be achieved through several strategies such as showcasing the service's benefits or unique qualities, presenting facts and figures that explain its characteristics, or leveraging a spokesperson (Stafford M. R. et al, 2002). In general, a spokesperson is a person who is chosen to speak officially for an organization; in marketing, he/she is the role that communicates information the public wants or needs and he/she's not only responsible for the messages being conveyed but should also be involved in the development of them (CDC, 2013).

A successful marketing campaign necessitates the selection of the appropriate spokesperson based on their credibility and attractiveness, as well as the alignment of the spokesperson's attributes with the brand's image. In the world of advertising, human endorsers can be a risky choice as their actions or behaviors can potentially harm their public image, which could, in turn, negatively impact the brand they represent. One potential solution to this issue is to use animated characters, as they do not have a public persona to maintain (Stafford M. R. et al, 2002). However, a study conducted by Ogle et al. found that there can be practical challenges associated with using them in advertising: the effectiveness of an animated character as an endorser varies based on

factors such as the target audience's age and sex, as well as the specific character chosen for the advertisement. Thus, it is important to carefully consider all potential risks and benefits before deciding on an advertising strategy (Ogle et al., 2017).

According to the source effect model, which draws on a broad range of research in marketing, psychology, and communication, source variables such as credibility, expertise, attractiveness, and similarity can significantly influence the attitudes and behavior of target audiences (Wilson J. W., 1987). Of these variables, source credibility is a key factor in a communicator's ability to persuade their audience. But what exactly constitutes a credible source? Research conducted by Yale University has shed light on this question, suggesting that the effectiveness of a spokesperson depends on both a trustworthiness/expertise component, which is related to the source's knowledge and honesty, and a similarity/attractiveness/likeability component, which relates to the source's overall appearance and their ability to connect with the audience on an interpersonal level. Understanding these key components of source credibility can help advertisers choose the most effective spokesperson for their campaigns.

Four main categories of spokespersons are commonly used in service advertising: celebrities, employees, customers, and spokescharacters.

## CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT

Celebrity endorsements are a common practice in advertising, and their impact on consumer behavior is widely recognized. According to The Economic Times, endorsement is a popular form of promotion or advertisement that leverages the power of famous figures or celebrities who have a high degree of trust, respect, and recognition among many people. In order to be effective, the celebrity endorser must be carefully matched to the brand they are promoting, considering factors such as their persona, values, and image, as well as the target audience's preferences and expectations. When used correctly, celebrity endorsers can help enhance a brand's visibility and appeal, especially for new brands with unknown products or consumers who are considering switching brands. Celebrity endorsers can also help to produce higher levels of brand and advertisement recall, which is essential for building long-term brand recognition and loyalty. However, it's important to note that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements depends on the credibility of the endorser with the target audience. Highly credible spokespersons are more effective for audiences who are initially unfavorable towards the brand or product, while moderately credible endorsers should be used for audiences who are already favorably inclined. For example, if a company wants to promote a new line of beauty products to consumers who are skeptical about its effectiveness, it might use a celebrity endorser who is known for their expertise in beauty and skincare, and who is perceived as trustworthy and knowledgeable by the target

audience. On the other hand, if the company wants to promote a new energy drink to an audience of fitness enthusiasts who are already favorably disposed towards the product, they might use a celebrity endorser who is seen as likable and relatable as a well-known athlete or fitness influencer.

Overall, the key to leveraging the power of celebrity endorsements is to carefully consider the target audience, choose an endorser who is a good match for the brand and product, and tailor the approach to the audience's preferences and expectations. By doing so, brands can effectively use celebrity endorsements to build brand recognition, improve recall, and ultimately drive sales.

### EMPLOYEES SPOKESPERSONS

In advertising for service companies, consumers can view the service personnel as a tangible and concrete representation of the company's offerings. By featuring employees in advertisements, particularly customer contact employees, service companies can enhance the credibility and perceived reliability of their brand. This is because customers often rely on the expertise and professionalism of service personnel when making purchasing decisions, and seeing employees featured in advertising can reinforce their trust in the company. Additionally, featuring service personnel in advertising can help to establish a more personal connection with the audience, as customers are more likely to relate to and feel comfortable with people who represent the company. As a result, including service personnel in advertising can be an effective strategy for service companies looking to build brand awareness and establish a strong, trustworthy reputation.

### CUSTOMERS SPOKESPERSONS

Previous customers who have expressed satisfaction with a product or service can offer valuable indications of their contentment with the experience. They can provide tangible evidence of their satisfaction through testimonials or reviews, which can offer insight into the quality of the product or service. In addition, their feedback can offer a rational analysis of the product or service's strengths and weaknesses, providing valuable information for potential customers. Furthermore, satisfied customers may also provide personal support for a business, becoming brand advocates and recommending the product or service to others. This word-of-mouth promotion can be a powerful tool for attracting new customers and building a loyal customer base.

Therefore, seeking out and leveraging the opinions of satisfied customers can be a valuable strategy for businesses looking to improve their reputation and attract new customers.

## THE SPOKESCHARACTER AS ENDORSER

Spokescharacters, which are animated beings or objects used in advertising to promote products, services, or ideas, offer an attractive and secure alternative to human spokespeople for certain advertising situations. They do not have the potential problems associated with off-stage behavior and can provide a more consistent and controlled message to the audience. Research on the use of created characters serving as spokespersons has primarily focused on children, as they can produce high levels of product recognition thanks to their aura of trust. Leo Burnett, the pioneer of cartoon-like characters in advertising, created The Great Giant, the first advertising character, and his success paved the way for the development of other iconic spokescharacters such as Tony the Tiger and the Michelin Man. Today, non-celebrity spokescharacters are likely more commonly used than celebrity ones, as they can be customized to fit a particular brand's image and values; thus, advertisers opt to develop their own characters so that they can exclusively exploit the advantageous and beneficial effects, resulting in increased brand equity and consumer engagement.

Spokescharacters are a popular advertising tool that can create excitement and interest as a unique spokesperson created specifically for a product or service; they can serve as a tangible representation of a particular service in all aspects of the marketing mix. However, it's important to set communication objectives before choosing a spokesperson to represent the brand, as different spokespeople can have different effects on different market offerings. Additionally, the effectiveness of advertising variables depends on the type of product being promoted, as products can be distinguished by the benefits sought and obtained through consumption. By selecting the appropriate spokescharacter and aligning the communication objectives with the product's benefits, advertisers can increase the effectiveness of their advertising campaigns and generate greater consumer engagement and brand loyalty.

If we consider the two major types of services, hedonic and utilitarian, it is known in the literature that they are inherently different from each other.

Utilitarian services are typically characterized as being functional or practical in nature. The primary goal of utilitarian services is to provide a specific benefit or solve a problem for the consumer. Examples of utilitarian services might include things like car repairs, medical services, or legal advice. In general, utilitarian services are focused on meeting the needs of the consumer rather than providing a fun or pleasurable experience.

Hedonic services, on the other hand, are primarily focused on providing an enjoyable or pleasurable experience for the consumer. Hedonic services are often associated with entertainment or leisure activities, such as going to a spa, visiting a theme park, or dining at a

fancy restaurant. The goal of hedonic services is to provide the consumer with a positive emotional experience, rather than simply fulfilling a specific functional need.

Overall, while both utilitarian and hedonic services can be valuable to consumers, they differ in their primary focus and the types of benefits they offer. Utilitarian services aim to solve problems or provide functional benefits, while hedonic services aim to create enjoyable and pleasurable experiences.

Given these differences, hedonic services, in particular, benefit greatly from the use of spokescharacters as they introduce an element of fun and create a beneficial alliance between the offering and the character. This is especially true for high-involvement offerings, where spokescharacters can successfully engage and entertain the audience. For example, a restaurant is a service that is often experiential, fun, and pleasurable, making it a perfect fit for the use of spokescharacters as advertisers. On the other hand, products with higher social and/or psychological risk may do better with a celebrity endorser. However, it's worth noting that hedonic services are also considered high-risk due to their experiential and value-expressive nature. As such, spokescharacters can be a great fit for hedonic services as they help to create a strong emotional connection with the audience and increase visibility in advertising. Overall, the use of spokescharacters in advertising can be a valuable strategy for businesses looking to promote their offerings and increase consumer engagement.

Trade characters are fictional, animated beings or animated objects that have been created for the promotion of a product, service, or idea and they have been found to be successful advertising tools as commercials with advertising-developed characters, who became associated with a brand, scored above average in their ability to change the brand preference (Stewart, Furse 1982). Although most trade characters are registered trademarks, they don't necessarily have to be legal trademarks because this definition would exclude those characters created solely for promotional purposes.

Trade characters must be animated because the term "character" implies a living personality, which is either naturally animated or designed to be animated. In addition, they must be fictional, as they serve a different purpose than celebrity spokespersons, whose value lies in their credibility as realistic spokespersons. Contrarily, trade characters are meant to transport the audience into a fantasy world where they suspend their disbelief and engage with the character. Lastly, celebrity cartoons cannot be considered trade characters because they originate from a source other than advertising, and their role is no different from that of any other celebrity spokesperson.

The use of trade characters has become a staple in advertising, providing a creative way to connect with audiences and promote a brand. There are three primary ways in which trade characters are

utilized to engage with consumers, which include creating product identification, promoting a brand personality, and providing promotional continuity.

Product identification is the most critical function of trade characters and is particularly relevant to this research. By creating a link between the product, packaging, and advertising, trade characters can help establish a unique identity for a brand in the minds of consumers. The roots of this approach lie in the development of trademarks for branded products, which were originally used to highlight differences between brands. Even if there were no actual differences, consumers would still ask for a specific brand by remembering the trademark or package. By featuring trade characters on a package, consumers can recognize the product even if the brand name has been removed. This is because trade characters tie together all promotional activities into a cohesive unit that effectively communicates the corporate message.

For what concerns promoting a brand personality, trade characters also communicate through their unique personalities. They can imbue the brand with meaning by symbolizing a character and lend emotional appeal to the brand by personifying the product. The personality of a trade character is crucial in giving meaning to a brand by transferring its cultural meaning to a product that may otherwise be meaningless. This cultural representation elicits a cluster of ideas and emotions that are commonly associated with the image. However, it is not enough to create a symbolically meaningful trade character as the consumer must be able to decode the character's meaning correctly for it to be effective. Therefore, trade characters must express their meanings quickly and effortlessly to compete in the media environment. The personality of trade characters also provides emotional appeal to the brand by symbolizing an emotional benefit that is transferred to the product. It lends warmth to the product, creating an emotional connection between the consumer and the character, which is crucial for its persuasive ability, especially when the consumer has low involvement with the product category. The emotional tie created by the trade character sells the symbolism it represents, making it an effective tool for promoting a brand personality.

Finally, trade characters are a powerful tool in creating promotional continuity across various advertising campaigns, brands in a product line, and even over time. By consistently appearing in each advertisement, a trade character serves as a clear signal to the consumer that the ad is for a particular brand. Using the same trade character for several brands can be incredibly valuable, as it generates cumulative publicity that helps each product connect and sell the others. Additionally, trade characters can provide a sense of continuity over time, as many of these characters have impressive longevity, and consumers have prior experience with them, enhancing their role as product identifiers. Thanks to these long-lasting characters, advertisers are able to build on an image that already exists in the consumer's mind, and in some cases, the characters



may even become objects of nostalgia, eliciting positive feelings toward a person's past life (Davis F., 1979).

In today's advertising landscape, trade characters have become a ubiquitous presence in popular culture, serving as effective advertising tools that have established themselves as an easily understood and accepted means of communication between advertisers and consumers. However, the effectiveness of such characters in advertising campaigns is contingent upon the interaction between the type of service being promoted and the type of spokesperson being used. This relationship is likely to hold true across a wide range of services and spokespersons, taking into account hedonic or utilitarian characteristics. It is worth noting that there exists a strong link between the attractiveness dimension of credibility and positive affect, which is especially significant when introducing new products or attempting to sway brand-switching behavior where no prior familiarity or predisposition exists among the audience. To overcome the intention-action gap, advertisers can incorporate integrated elements in their promotional campaigns, including spokescharacters, to influence consumer behavior and ultimately drive purchases.

## **2.2 - Overview of the concept of nudging & cognitive biases.**

The implementation of behavioral techniques and nudges has been a common practice in the private sector for many years. However, with the advancement of scientific knowledge in consumer psychology over several generations, there has been a growing adoption of these methods in the public sector as well. Although the term "nudge" was introduced in the late 1990s, it was not until the publication of the book "Nudge" by esteemed behavioral economists Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein in 2008 that the theory gained significant attention. Since then, the Nobel Prize-winning theory has gained popularity in politics, economics, and the development sector. In fact, Nudge Units have been established at both the national level in countries such as the UK and Japan, and at an international level with organizations like the OECD and UN (ITC, 2018).

What exactly is a nudge?

According to Thaler and Sunstein (2009), "a nudge is any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people's behavior in a predictable way without forbidding any options, or significantly changing their economic consequences. To count as a mere nudge, the intervention must be easy and cheap to avoid. Nudges are not mandates. Putting food at eye level to attract attention, and hence to increase the likelihood of getting chosen, counts as a nudge. The banning of junk food

does not.” To put it simply, a nudge is a subtle alteration in the presentation of options that makes the desired choice more appealing, to assist individuals in making the most appropriate decision. Nudges can be quite influential, as they capitalize on people's pre-existing intentions and make it simpler to follow through with them.

Consider the following scenario from Thaler's book *Nudge*: two cafeterias are attempting to decrease student consumption of junk food. One cafeteria opts to tackle the issue by levying a tax on junk food, effectively increasing the cost of those items. Alternatively, they could prohibit the sale of junk food altogether. The second cafeteria, however, chooses to modify the presentation of its food, making junk food less appealing. Specifically, fruits and vegetables are prominently displayed at eye level and within easy reach, while junk food is placed higher and further out of reach. Although both cafeterias are attempting to reduce junk food consumption, they employ contrasting approaches. The first cafeteria relies on incentives and restrictions to influence behavior, thereby limiting freedom of choice. The second cafeteria employs a nudging strategy, neither incentivizing nor restricting choice but instead subtly guiding customers towards healthier options.

In order for nudges to be effective in changing behavior, it is important to ensure that the underlying process is both efficient and effective (Soman, D., 2015). Even with the most subtle and well-crafted nudges, if the process itself is inefficient, the product being offered is unappealing, or the benefits promised are not compelling, behavioral change may be difficult to achieve.

For this reason, it is important to critically inquiry which tactic is suitable for the given context and, even though there are no definitive solutions, there are four factors that we must contemplate to determine the appropriate type of approach to adopt.

The first factor to consider is the practicality and cost-effectiveness of implementing enforcement. This is especially significant when utilizing regulations, restrictions, and incentives as methods to alter behavior. Before implementing such strategies, it is necessary to evaluate whether it is feasible to monitor and enforce particular actions. Is it straightforward to identify those who engage in a specific behavior? Can appropriate sanctions and rewards be applied effectively? If the cost of monitoring behavior is high, it may be less efficient to employ these methods.

The second factor to consider is the importance of preserving freedom of choice. In the attempt to directing customers' behavior towards a specific choice, businesses and marketers may choose to eliminate Option A and offer only Option B in order to prompt behavioral change. However, this approach may not be appropriate in the social welfare domain, even though it may be acceptable from a business standpoint. Recent examples, such as Facebook and Apple, have shown that consumers may resist such strategies. Policymakers must weigh the potential benefits

of Option B against the possible negative response from the community or government, especially if Option A has serious consequences for society or individuals while Option B improves their standard of living.

For example, if Option B enhances an individual's standard of living, or if Option A leads to serious consequences for society or the individual, the policymaker should also consider whether eliminating choices results in a negative response from the community or from the government.

A third factor to consider is the potential response from the market. Policymakers operating in fields such as consumer protection and financial services must anticipate how businesses will react to their policies. For instance, mandating the removal of certain products or prohibiting their sale may prompt businesses to develop and offer new products. Similarly, providing an incentive for choosing Option B may compel the business to create an even more enticing incentive for choosing Option A. Thus, it's crucial to remember that any action taken may elicit a reaction from the market.

Lastly, a fourth consideration is the potential impact of the intervention beyond its immediate objective. While interventions are crafted with a focus on their short-term consequences, policymakers must also consider the secondary and long-term effects of their actions. An instance of a consequential outcome that might not be desirable is the "licensing effect" that researchers have observed. This effect reveals that individuals who engage in one favorable behavior are prone to follow it up with negative behavior. For instance, studies indicate that people who conserve water tend to consume more electricity. Similarly, those who use paper towels made from recycled materials are inclined to use a greater number of paper towels. In both scenarios, a positive action like conservation leads to an unfavorable downstream consequence of increased usage. Furthermore, it is crucial that we can differentiate between soft nudges for behavioral optimization, such as sliced apples, from tactics that use subtle psychological persuasion. According to Ben Williamson, a researcher at Stirling University who studies the intersection of politics, economics, and digital technologies in education, "the nudgocratic ideals of soft paternalism" can lead to inappropriate decisions, cognitive errors, and harmful behaviors, just as easily as it can encourage personal responsibility and well-being. So, nudging can also be manipulative. However, if applied as described by Thaler and Sunstein, nudging should only cause a minor, temporary behavior changes and should not have a long-term impact on people's attitudes. Despite this, caution is always recommended, and researchers/marketers must thoroughly consider the long-term effects of any intervention.

The technique of nudging can be a powerful tool in various domains, but its successful work requires intricate and subtle considerations. Establishing a broad framework can guide the development of the nudging process and the design of choice architecture; to determine whether

to implement nudging strategies such as Defaults, Simplifications, and Opt-in versus Opt-out, several factors must be considered. These include the importance of freedom of choice, individual preferences, the inappropriate use of economic incentives or penalties, the effect of cognitive influences on behavior, and the difficulty individuals have in turning intentions into action. Additionally, it is essential to ensure that the intervention aligns with current regulations or incentives. However, there are situations in which nudging, and choice architecture may not be appropriate, such as when businesses or other institutions in the marketplace can change the context and additional regulation is necessary to set boundaries for market behavior or incentives require adjustment to improve alignment with policy goals, and when Intended outcome of the nudge may go against individual intentions.

The power of nudging strategies can have a significant impact on guiding children's food choices, which is the central focus of this research. Human beings possess cognitive and decision-making capacities from birth, but these can be influenced by social and economic contexts, as well as the stage of life of the individual, leading to the so-called “cognitive biases”, a term introduced in the early 1970s by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman to describe people's systematic but presumably erroneous response patterns to problems of judgment and decision-making. Tversky and Kahneman's research program - called the heuristics and biases program, aimed to understand how people make decisions when faced with limited resources. Their work was inspired by Herbert Simon's concept of bounded rationality, which challenged the classical rationality approach of finding optimal solutions to decision-making problems using probability theory and statistics. Bounded rationality takes into account the constraints that individuals face, such as limited time, information, and cognitive capacity, which forces them to rely on simple decision-making strategies or heuristics. The heuristics and biases program followed this principle by identifying the specific biases and constraints that influence human judgment and decision-making; it was based on the idea that the human cognitive system, like the perceptual system, uses imperfect cues to infer information about the external world, which can lead to errors in some situations. As a result, the research generated a straightforward and productive paradigm that involved presenting participants with a reasoning problem, comparing their responses with the normative solution from probability theory or statistics, and listing the biases or systematic deviations found between the responses and the normative solutions. The biases were then explained as the result of using heuristics or simple cognitive principles. Using this strategy, researchers in the heuristics and biases program have produced an extensive catalog of norm violations (Wilke A., Mata R., 2012).

The category of children obviously is no exception to the "deviant" effect of cognitive bias, quite the contrary: they may be particularly susceptible to some cognitive biases because they are still

developing their cognitive abilities, including their executive functioning skills, such as impulse control and decision-making. As they grow and develop, children learn to recognize and overcome cognitive biases through experience and education. Examples of cognitive biases that can affect children include:

- **Confirmation bias:** this bias occurs when people look for information that confirms their existing beliefs while ignoring evidence that contradicts them. Children may be more likely to hold onto their existing beliefs and ignore evidence that challenges them.
- **Availability bias:** this bias occurs when people overestimate the importance of information that is readily available to them. Children may be more influenced by information that is easily accessible to them, such as information they learned in school or from their parents.
- **Self-serving bias:** This bias occurs when people attribute positive events to their own abilities and negative events to external factors. Children may be more likely to attribute their successes to their own abilities and their failures to external factors.

Overall, it's important to recognize that children can be affected by cognitive biases and to take steps to help them recognize and overcome these biases as they grow and develop. In particular, the bias that this research aims to exploit in the direction of better food consumption choices thanks to the use of spokescharacters is known as **mere-exposure effect** or **familiarity bias**. The mere exposure effect is a psychological phenomenon that refers to the tendency for people to develop a preference for things simply because they are familiar with them; in other words, people tend to like things more if they have been exposed to them more frequently. This effect was first demonstrated by psychologist Robert Zajonc in the 1960s in one study (published in the *American Psychologist* in 1980) in which participants were shown a series of nonsense words and were asked to rate how much they liked each word. The words were presented multiple times, with some words being presented more frequently than others and the results showed that participants tended to rate the words that were presented more frequently as more likable. The same result has been observed in a variety of contexts, including faces, products, and music. For example, research has shown that people tend to rate faces as more attractive if they have seen them more frequently. Similarly, people are more likely to purchase products that they have seen multiple times, even if they don't consciously remember seeing them.

There are several theories as to why the mere exposure effect occurs. One theory is that repeated exposure to a stimulus leads to a sense of familiarity, which in turn leads to positive feelings; another theory is that repeated exposure to a stimulus makes it easier to process, which leads to more positive evaluations. Overall, the mere exposure effect is a powerful psychological phenomenon that can influence our preferences and choices without us even realizing it.

Spokescharacters are frequently employed in advertising and marketing campaigns to increase product recognition and memorability, particularly among children. Such characters can create a sense of familiarity and preference among children, potentially enhancing their attraction to the products they represent. Additionally, spokescharacters may tap into children's sense of imagination and play, further contributing to their appeal. Even at a young age, children can recognize familiar faces, and by the age of 2, they may already exhibit a preference for familiar people and objects. This preference for familiarity likely explains why children are often drawn to products featuring spokescharacters, as they have likely encountered these characters before and have formed positive associations with them.

Another interesting bias affecting children that may be found useful later in our research is the so-called **gender bias** or **gender stereotyping**, a cognitive bias that is formed through socialization and the internalization of cultural norms and values. This bias leads individual to categorize and prefer certain characteristics, roles, and behaviors based on gender, such as associating certain toys or products with boys or girls (Martin, C. L., Ruble, D. N., 2010). Studies have shown that children as young as 2-3 years old are able to categorize toys and games by gender, and by age 4-5 they may already have strong gender preferences for toys, activities, and colors. Boys are often socialized to prefer toys associated with action, aggression, and competition, while girls are encouraged to play with toys that emphasize nurturing, appearance, and domesticity (Blakemore, J. E. O., Centers, R. E., 2005). This socialization may explain why young boys are more likely to choose products featuring male superheroes, while young girls are more likely to choose products featuring female characters or stereotypically feminine themes. Additionally, the lack of representation and diversity in media and entertainment targeted toward children may contribute to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and biases.

### **2.3 – Use of cartoonized spokespersons as a nudging strategy in food marketing for children.**

The rising rate of pediatric obesity and the increasing incidence of type 2 diabetes among children are growing concerns in modern society, and overconsumption of unhealthy foods and beverages is a major contributor to this alarming trend. One potential explanation for this behavior is that children possess an innate biological preference for salty and sweet flavors and a dislike for bitter tastes: this is thought to be an evolutionary adaptation, as sweetness is associated with the presence of energy-dense foods that are essential for survival (Johnson, S. L., 2018), and a preference for salty flavors may be influenced by the fact that biologically sodium is necessary for maintaining fluid balance in the body. However, excessive consumption of sodium can lead

to health problems such as high blood pressure, which is a risk factor for heart disease (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). In addition to these biological factors, food marketing plays a significant role in shaping children's dietary habits and both the Federal Trade Commission, and the Institute of Medicine have reported on the impact of advertising on children's food choices, noting that food companies often use marketing tactics to promote unhealthy products to children (Ogle, A. D. et al., 2017), as will be discussed later.

Food marketing involves a variety of tactics, such as advertising, packaging, and product placement, that are designed to make certain foods more appealing to consumers; these tactics can include the use of colorful packaging, catchy slogans, and endorsements from popular figures like athletes or celebrities. In particular, children are more susceptible to these persuasive techniques - including the use of cartoonized spokespersons - compared to adults, because they have limited experience and knowledge about the world and their cognitive abilities are still developing. Therefore, they lack the cognitive ability to fully understand the persuasive intent of advertising: for example, children may not acknowledge that food marketing is designed to sell products and may instead view it as a source of entertainment or information. This is one of the main reasons why it is important for food marketers to recognize this vulnerability and use advertising strategies in a responsible and ethical way that supports healthy eating habits among children.

Food marketing can also play a role in creating and reinforcing cultural norms around food: for example, the prevalence of fast-food restaurants and convenience stores in many communities can contribute to the perception that unhealthy, processed foods are a normal part of everyday life. In fact, research suggests that exposure to food advertising can lead to increased consumption of unhealthy foods and beverages (Nestle, M., 2003). Food advertising is designed to create positive associations between products and specific emotions, such as happiness or excitement and this can make us more likely to choose those products to experience those emotions. Additionally, it often emphasizes convenience and taste over health, which can encourage us to choose less healthy options: exposure to advertising can lead to increased consumption because it can create a desire or craving for those products. For example, seeing an advertisement for a sugary cereal can make us want to eat that cereal, even if we weren't thinking about it before; over time, repeated exposure to food advertising can lead to habitual consumption of unhealthy foods and beverages. This considered, there is a need for greater awareness of the impact of food marketing on consumer behavior and the importance of promoting healthy eating habits through responsible and ethical marketing practices.

Overall, food marketing is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that can have both positive and negative effects on children's diets and health; by understanding the role that food marketing

plays in shaping children's food choices, we can work towards developing policies and interventions that promote healthier eating habits.

In recent years, the use of nudges in food marketing advertisements and promotions has gained increasing attention among researchers and one interesting study by Cadario, R., & Chandon, P. (2020) analyzed the effectiveness of seven different healthy eating nudges, categorized based on whether they are cognitively, affectively, or behaviorally oriented, considering not only the type of nudge but also the type of eating behavior and population and study characteristics. The meta-analysis of the study produced different noteworthy results. Firstly, making healthy food options the “default choice” (e.g., putting fruit on display at eye level, while placing unhealthy snacks out of reach) can nudge people towards making healthier choices. Secondly, reducing portion sizes can also encourage healthier eating, as people tend to eat whatever amount is presented to them, and offering smaller plates or packaging pre-portioned meals can help people consume fewer calories. Thirdly, emphasizing that healthy eating is the “norm” among a particular group or community can encourage individuals to adopt similar behaviors (e.g., displaying signs indicating that the majority of customers choose a particular healthy option can influence others to follow suit). Lastly, making healthy foods more accessible and convenient, such as placing them in highly visible areas or offering them at checkout counters, can also encourage healthier eating. However, the most important finding of the study is that combining multiple nudges can lead to even greater improvements in healthy eating behaviors. For example, combining default options with smaller portion sizes resulted in a 28% increase in the selection of healthy foods.

The meta-analysis conducted by Cadario is not the only analysis with a focus on the validity of nudges in the behavioral domain: there is still a growing body of research on the effectiveness of different kinds of nudges. For instance, Mertens et al. (2022) conducted a review of the literature on nudging and found evidence that nudges can be effective in a wide range of domains, including health behavior, consumer behavior, and financial decision-making. They also found that the effectiveness of nudges can depend on factors such as the context in which they are used, the target population, and the specific type of nudge employed. Moreover, DellaVigna and Linos (2022) conducted a meta-analysis of studies on nudging and found that nudges had a small but statistically significant effect on behavior. They also found that nudges tend to be more effective when they are combined with other interventions, such as providing information or incentives.

However, some academics have argued that correcting for the presence of publication bias may eliminate the published effectiveness of nudges entirely (Maier et al., 2022) and some questions about the theoretical and practical value of nudging have been explored with respect to their ability to produce lasting behavior change, as well as their assumptions of irrationality and lack of agency. Kusters and Van der Heijden (2015) examined the theoretical and practical value of



nudging and questioned whether they could produce lasting behavior change. They pointed out that while nudges may be effective in changing behavior in the short term, it is uncertain whether they can lead to long-term changes; Frey and Rogers (2014) also questioned the ability of nudges to produce lasting behavior change, arguing that they may only work in situations where people do not have strong preferences or are not committed to a particular behavior. Additionally, Gigerenzer (2015) criticized nudging for assuming that people are irrational and lack agency and argued that people have the ability to make rational and informed decisions. Some have also argued that nudging may be paternalistic, as it involves shaping people's choices without their explicit consent and may lead to unintended consequences if people feel manipulated or lose trust in the nudging entity. These questions and criticisms suggest the need for continued research and evaluation of nudging interventions to ensure their effectiveness and ethicality.

One of the most interesting forms of nudges for children towards healthy food choices - and the focus of this research - is the use of spokescharacters. According to an article by Roberto C. A. from 2010, food companies spend over \$1.6 billion per year on advertising targeted towards young consumers with character licensing being one of the most popular marketing strategy and previous research has confirmed that cartoonized spokespersons can be effective in influencing children's food choices. To provide an example, a study by Roberto et al. from the same year showed that children who were presented with a cartoon character promoting a healthy food option were more likely to choose that option than children who were presented with no cartoon character. This is because cartoon characters are often viewed as fun, friendly, and entertaining by children and their presence on food packaging can make the healthy option seem more appealing and desirable, creating a positive association with the product. Similarly, a study by Halford et al. (2008) found that the use of cartoon characters on food packaging was associated with an increased preference for healthier food options among children. The results showed that children were significantly more likely to choose the food item with a cartoon character, regardless of whether it was a healthy or unhealthy option. However, when given a choice between two healthy food options, children were more likely to choose the option with a cartoon character than the option without. This suggests that the use of cartoon characters can increase the appeal of healthy food options for children.

Although cartoonized spokespersons have been often used as a tool to encourage children to choose healthier food options, there has been some concern about the potential for cartoonized spokespersons to promote unhealthy food options as well. For example, a study by Dhar and Simonson (2003) found that children were likelier to choose a less healthy food option when presented with a popular cartoon character than when presented alone. The results showed that children were significantly more likely to choose the food item with the cartoon character

promoting an unhealthy option, compared to the item without a cartoon character. This suggests that the presence of a popular cartoon character can negatively influence children's food choices and increase the appeal of unhealthy food options. Overall, the study provides evidence that the use of popular cartoon characters on food packaging can have both positive and negative effects on children's food choices, depending on the healthiness of the promoted food item and this suggests that cartoonized spokespersons may be more effective at promoting food choices in general, rather than just healthy food choices.

An interesting 2017 study conducted by Ogle et al. - aimed to investigate whether the inclusion of licensed media characters on packages of healthful food and beverage products could enhance children's preference for and attention to these items - confirmed this counterintuitive potential for characters to negatively impact food choices. The researchers hypothesized that children would demonstrate a stronger preference for less healthful products and would pay more attention to and select items featuring media characters, regardless of their nutritional quality. Additionally, the researchers expected that children would exhibit a greater preference for more healthful products that featured characters compared to less healthful products without characters. The study revealed that although children were initially attracted to products with media characters, they did not necessarily choose healthier options; in fact, they tended to prefer less healthy products, even when those products were paired with popular characters.

Notably, in approximately 62% of cases, children chose products without characters, but differences were found in children's choices based on age, sex and the specific cartoon character displayed with the product, suggesting that other factors such as taste or familiarity with the character may have been more important in their decision-making. This noteworthy finding highlights the importance of a well-targeted and demographic-specific approach when using media characters to promote healthy eating habits in children. It suggests that marketers and health professionals need to carefully consider the age, sex, and preferences of their target audience when incorporating characters in marketing strategies for healthful food and beverage products and, by doing so, they may be better able to influence children's food choices in a positive way.

Overall, while the study found that incorporating media characters did not increase children's likelihood of choosing healthful food, it did reveal that media characters can actually make healthier food options more appealing. In fact, media characters proved to be effective at capturing children's attention, with kids spending more time looking at products that featured characters - with an impact that varied based on age, sex, and the specific character used. This increased appeal can be attributed to the familiarity bias that affects children, as positive associations with familiar and likable characters can transfer to a brand or product, creating trust,

loyalty, recognition, and preference; in particular, the research has shown that this effect can have a major attractive and engaging impact with younger audiences. Specifically, the study found that the use of spokescharacters had a reduced effect on children aged 7 to 9, while younger children aged 3 to 6 were more likely to prefer products that featured media characters and were more attracted to them. Therefore, it is again demonstrated that it's crucial for companies to carefully analyze the target market they intend to focus on when deciding to introduce licensed characters to ensure maximum impact. By doing so, they can more effectively and conveniently utilize media characters to appeal to their desired audiences and promote healthy eating habits among younger consumers.

The study previously mentioned conducted by Roberto A. C. et al. in 2010 provided another useful insight in the way characters appearing on food packaging influence children's taste preferences and snack choices: participants were significantly more likely to choose licensed-character food items for snacks because they perceived the food items with licensed characters to taste better than those presented in plain packaging. This can be due to the emotional connection they make with the characters: children often associate them with positive emotions, such as happiness and excitement and these positive emotions can influence their perception of the food item and create an expectation that the food will taste good. Moreover, children's lack of experience with different tastes and flavors can also play a role in their perception that food items with licensed characters taste better. Since children are still developing their taste preferences, they may be more drawn to foods that are familiar and comforting, such as those that feature popular licensed characters.

The scenario provided by the study's results confirms the concerns previously discussed about the potential for cartoonized spokespersons to promote unhealthy food options: licensed characters on junk food packaging can negatively influence children's eating habits by increasing positive taste perceptions and preferences for unhealthy foods. The study therefore suggests that the use of licensed characters on junk food packaging should be restricted and regulated, particularly for high-energy, low-nutrient products.

Despite the variety of studies conducted on this topic, the use of cartoonized spokespersons as a nudge for promoting healthy food choices remains an area of interest for researchers and marketers alike and there is still a need for more research in this area, particularly in terms of understanding how different types of cartoon characters and food options may affect the effectiveness of the nudge.

### **2.3.1 Spokescharacters on child-friendly restaurant menus for healthy choices in restaurants.**

The research conducted by Cadario, R., & Chandon, P. in 2020 previously mentioned turns out to be a valuable tool in directing and helping different types of stakeholders in implementing managerial and marketing strategies in real-world settings, including restaurants, supermarket chains, food-service companies, and policy making. In particular, restaurants can provide an ideal setting for interventions aimed at promoting healthier food choices for children; for example, restaurants can use nudges such as making healthy options the default choice, offering smaller portion sizes, and placing healthy options at eye-level or on the menu board.

The physical, economic, and social factors that influence our access to and consumption of food include the availability and accessibility of different types of food, such as healthy or unhealthy options, the pricing and marketing of different foods, and the cultural and social norms around eating and they make up our 'food environment'. Targeting children's food environments is crucial in preventing obesity and restaurants play a significant role in these environments, as families are increasingly consuming meals outside of the home and using modified children's menus in restaurants is a potentially efficient approach to improving the quality of their food choices.

One promising setting to promote healthier food choices for children is children's menus. A recent article by Schneider et al. (2022) reviewed two systematic experiments on restaurant menu interventions and found that point-of-purchase interventions, such as menu labeling, were successful in promoting healthier food options. Nudging and boosting techniques, such as placing healthy options at the top of the menu, using fun descriptive names, and providing easy-to-understand labels are suggested to optimize children's menus.

One study used a blinded quasi-randomized controlled trial design to investigate whether and how a children's menu in a real restaurant could be optimized using nudging and boosting techniques to significantly increase orders of a more nutritious target dish compared with a control menu. Although the modified menu design did not have a significant impact on customer choices, it highlights the importance of understanding psychological decision-making processes to inform interventions in a restaurant context. Therefore, it supports the need for further research in this area to understand the social interactions and decision-making processes of parents and children at the table. On the other hand, child-friendly menu labeling has been shown to be an effective tool in promoting healthier food choices among pediatric patients and their parents in hospitals. By adding child-friendly menu labeling - such as descriptive names and colorful symbols - to healthier food options, there was an increase in their selection by pediatric patients

and their parents. The effect of the child-friendly menu labeling was more pronounced among parents than among pediatric patients, suggesting that parents play an important role in influencing their children's food choices. Child-friendly menu labeling can be easily implemented in hospitals and has the potential to improve the nutritional quality of food consumed by pediatric patients and their families. In a recent study, child-friendly labeling increased the selection of healthier meals among children by 18.7% and increased the selection of fruits and vegetables by 21.9%.

Overall, these findings suggest that child-friendly menu labeling is a promising approach for promoting healthier food choices among children in hospital settings.

By incorporating spokescharacters into child-friendly menu labeling, hospitals and other food service providers can make healthy food options more visible and attractive to children. For example, a cartoon image of a carrot or apple can be used to represent healthy food options, while an image of a hamburger or pizza can be used to represent less healthy options. In particular, the use of cartoonized spokespersons on restaurant menus has been proposed as a potential strategy for encouraging children to make healthier food choices when dining out. Research in this area is still limited, but some studies have shown promising results. For example, Anzman-Frasca et al. (2014) conducted a study to investigate the impact of using cartoon characters on restaurant menus to promote healthier food choices among children. The researchers gave children menus with no characters, generic characters, or licensed cartoon characters promoting healthy food options. The results showed that children who were given menus with licensed cartoon characters were more likely to choose healthier options, such as fruit or vegetables, compared to children who were given menus with no characters or generic characters. The researchers suggest that the use of licensed cartoon characters can be an effective way to promote healthier food choices among children, as they may make healthy options more appealing and engaging to children. However, more research is needed in this area to determine the long-term effectiveness of this strategy and to identify the most effective ways to use cartoon characters on menus to promote healthy eating habits among children.

The study also yielded additional insights into effective strategies for promoting healthy choices on menus: children were more likely to select healthier options when they were highlighted or otherwise emphasized on the menu. For example, when healthy options were listed in a separate section or were otherwise visually distinguished on the menu, children were more likely to choose these options. It was also proven that the impact of cartoon characters on menu choices was stronger for younger children (ages 3-6) compared to older children (ages 7-10).

Overall, the study provides evidence that the use of cartoon characters and visual cues on menus can be an effective strategy for encouraging children to make healthier food choices. However,

further research is needed to better understand the mechanisms underlying these effects and to identify the most effective ways to implement these strategies in various food service settings. Indeed, although there has been extensive research conducted on the effectiveness of using spokescharacters in food marketing, there is a gap in knowledge when it comes to the use of spokescharacters on children's menus in restaurants. While many studies have demonstrated the positive and/or negative impact of using characters on food packaging and in advertising, there have been no previous studies or experiments that specifically examine the impact of spokescharacters on children's menus in restaurants. Given the significant influence that food marketing can have on children's dietary choices and given that children's menus are a popular option in many restaurants, exploring the use of spokescharacters on children's menus could offer valuable insights into how restaurants can encourage healthier food choices among young diners. While changes to physical menus have been shown to work with adults and parents in encouraging healthier food choices, it is unclear if this approach can be effective with children. The study by Schneider, Markovinic and Mata (2022) sought to address this question by investigating whether and how a children's menu from a real restaurant can be optimized using nudging and boosting techniques to increase orders of a more nutritious dish compared to a control menu. The results of the study suggested that modifying the children's menu did not significantly increase the number of orders for a healthy dish compared to a neutral control menu. However, the study did highlight that boosting methods on social processes and joint decision-making could increase the frequency of the desired choice. Interestingly, this approach may be effective in addressing the perception that parents have of character-based food products as being less healthful, as suggested by Ogle et al.'s study.

#### **2.4 - Ethical issues in research on children.**

Research involving children raises a range of ethical issues that must be considered to ensure the participants' safety, welfare, and rights.

One fundamental issue is obtaining informed consent from the child and their parents or guardians. Caldwell et al. (2004) emphasize that children are considered vulnerable due to their developing cognitive and decision-making abilities, which may limit their understanding of research procedures and potential risks. Therefore, it is essential to provide age-appropriate information and obtain informed consent from both the child's parents or guardians and the child themselves, where appropriate.

Pritchard and Simonsen (2019) further discuss the importance of involving children in the consent process and obtaining their assent. They argue that children have the right to understand and

participate in the decision-making process, and their assent should be sought in a developmentally appropriate way. This includes providing information in a way that the child can understand and giving them the opportunity to ask questions and express their concerns.

Researchers should consider the potential risks and benefits of the study and make sure that any harm or discomfort is minimized. For example, they can use non-invasive methods or limit the duration of the study and if a child experiences distress during it, they should provide appropriate support to ensure their well-being. To ensure that potential risks are minimized, researchers must also disclose any potential risks to the parents or guardians of the child participant: parents or guardians should be informed of the potential risks, benefits, and uncertainties associated with the research so that they can make an informed decision about whether to allow their child to participate. The welfare of the child participant should always take precedence over the research goals, and researchers should be prepared to modify or terminate the study if necessary to ensure the child's safety. De Vries et al. (2011) suggest that researchers should also consider the potential long-term effects of the study on the child participants. For example, research on sensitive topics such as abuse, or trauma may cause emotional distress that could continue long after the study has ended. Thus, it is therefore important to take appropriate steps to minimize potential long-term harm and provide support to participants who may need it even after the study has ended.

When involving child participants in research, a third ethical concern is avoiding coercion or undue influence that may compromise the voluntariness of their participation. Children may feel compelled to participate in research due to various reasons, such as peer pressure, a desire to please the researcher or the expectation of a reward. To prevent this, researchers should ensure that the child participant fully understands the purpose and nature of the study, as well as their rights and responsibilities as a participant. The consent process should also emphasize that participation is entirely voluntary, and the child can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Furthermore, any incentives offered to child participants should be reasonable and not so significant that they coerce the child to participate. For example, researchers may offer small gifts or tokens of appreciation, such as stickers or certificates, as a way of thanking the child for their participation. However, they should not offer incentives that could potentially influence the child's decision to participate, such as cash or other significant rewards. Additionally, children should be informed that they can refuse to participate in the study without facing any negative consequences or punishment. It is essential to emphasize that the decision to participate or not to participate is entirely up to the child and their parents or guardians. Researchers must also obtain informed consent from the parents or guardians of the child participant, who must also understand the voluntary nature of their child's participation and the potential risks and benefits of the study.

(American Psychological Association, 2010) (Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences, 2016)

A fourth ethical issue is protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the children involved to ensure that their personal information is not misused or disclosed without their consent. Researchers must obtain explicit consent from the parents or guardians before collecting any personal information, including medical or demographic data, and inform them about how the data will be used for research purposes. This informed consent process should also include details about who will have access to the data and how it will be stored securely. Additionally, the child's anonymity and confidentiality should be protected throughout the study, and this can be achieved by assigning a unique identifier code to each participant instead of using their name and ensuring that any data collected is kept secure and only accessible to authorized personnel. Additionally, researchers must take measures to prevent accidental or intentional breaches of confidentiality, such as using password-protected electronic devices and securing physical records in locked cabinets. If there is a need to share data with other researchers or agencies, such as for peer review or regulatory purposes, researchers should ensure that appropriate measures are in place to maintain confidentiality and protect the child's privacy. In cases where confidentiality cannot be maintained due to legal or ethical obligations, researchers must inform the parents or guardians and obtain their consent to share the information. (National Institutes of Health, 2018) (World Medical Association, 2013).

Overall, research involving children requires a thoughtful and ethical approach that prioritizes the welfare and rights of the participants. By following ethical guidelines and considering the unique needs and vulnerabilities of children, researchers can conduct studies that are both scientifically valid and ethically responsible.

The importance of ethical considerations in research involving children cannot be overstated. As minors, children are inherently vulnerable and require special protection to ensure their well-being and safety. Any research that involves direct interaction with children must be conducted with the utmost care and attention to ethical guidelines. However, the present thesis project focuses on studying the opinions of common adult individuals and adult experts on issues related to children, but it does not involve any direct interaction with children, thereby avoiding any potential ethical issues in research. The project adheres to ethical guidelines by obtaining informed consent from adult participants, ensuring their anonymity and confidentiality, and maintaining the security of any personal data collected. The study design also ensures that the opinions expressed by adult participants are not used to stigmatize or harm children in any way. Overall, this project is committed to conducting research in an ethical and responsible manner,



while providing valuable insights into the perceptions and attitudes of adults toward issues related to children.

### **3. The study.**

This paragraph presents the narrative-based theoretical framework that underpins the current research study. Grounded in the belief that stories and narratives are not just modes of communication but essential sources of knowledge, this framework offers a unique lens through which to explore the central research question:

“How effectively is the use of 'cartoonized' spokescharacters on restaurant menus as nudges to influence children's food choices and preferences towards healthier options?”

#### **3.1 – Narrative-based theoretical framework, research design, and approach.**

A narrative-based theoretical framework is an approach that utilizes stories, narratives, or storytelling as a central component to understand and explain a phenomenon, concept, or research question. In this framework, narratives are not only seen as tools for communication but also as fundamental sources of knowledge and insight. Indeed, narratives are considered essential for conveying meaning, culture, and experiences; they provide context, emotions, and depth that traditional analytical approaches might miss. This takes to the choice of the research design and approach of the study, which is purely qualitative and gathers insights and information from deep interviews following the ZMET framework to participants that use their expertise and/or direct experience with children to create narratives.

Narratives help individuals make sense of complex information, events, and experiences. People often construct narratives to create coherent and meaningful interpretations of their lives and the world around them.

##### *Narratives as Sense-Making.*

At the heart of this theoretical framework lies the recognition that narratives serve as mechanisms of sense-making. Individuals often construct narratives to weave disparate experiences, emotions, and events into coherent and meaningful accounts. The power of narratives lies in their ability to bridge the gap between lived experiences and shared understanding, transcending mere data points to convey deeper truths.

### *Narrative Structural Elements*

Central to narratives are structural elements such as characters, plotlines, settings, conflicts, and resolutions. These elements facilitate the crafting of compelling and relatable stories that resonate with audiences. Through the artful arrangement of these elements, narratives not only convey information but also evoke emotions and provoke introspection, creating compelling and engaging stories.

### *The Role of Context and Subjectivity*

Narratives are not standalone entities; they are situated within cultural, social, historical, and personal contexts. This contextualization adds layers of meaning and allows for a more nuanced interpretation. The interplay between the narrative and its context shapes the narrative's significance and relevance. Moreover, narrative-based research acknowledges the subjectivity inherent in storytelling. Different perspectives and viewpoints can coexist within a single narrative, reflecting the diverse nature of human experiences. By embracing multiple perspectives, this framework captures a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

### **Research design, and approach.**

Researchers using a narrative-based framework analyze the narratives for underlying themes, patterns, and meanings. The focus is on understanding the narrative's context, subtext, and the emotions it evokes.

### *Contextualization*

Narratives are situated within their cultural, social, historical, and personal contexts. This contextualization provides depth to the analysis and helps uncover the broader implications of the narrative.

### *Subjectivity and Multiple Perspectives*

Narratives inherently capture different perspectives and subjectivities. Multiple viewpoints can be integrated to provide a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

### *Narrative Types*

Various types of narratives can be studied, including personal life stories, oral histories, fictional narratives, folktales, case studies, and more. The choice of narrative type depends on the research focus and context.

The collection of narratives involves various methods, such as in-depth interviews, written testimonials, and analysis of visual media. Each method offers a unique way to access personal stories, oral histories, and other narrative forms, allowing for a rich and diverse dataset. The analysis can involve coding, thematic analysis, and interpretation to extract meaning.

Then, the analysis of narratives goes beyond surface-level interpretation. Researchers engage in coding, thematic analysis, and interpretation to uncover underlying themes, emotions, and patterns. This process delves into the layers of meaning embedded within the narrative, revealing insights that quantitative methods might overlook.

Narrative-based frameworks are commonly used in fields like psychology, sociology, anthropology, literature studies, and qualitative research. They can also be applied in areas such as organizational studies, healthcare, and education. A narrative-based theoretical framework goes beyond traditional empirical approaches by recognizing the significance of stories in shaping human understanding and meaning. It allows researchers to explore the complexities of human experiences and offers a rich avenue for uncovering insights that might otherwise remain hidden.

### **Application**

This theoretical framework perfectly embraces and guides the study presented in this paper, starting from the desire and need to gather as much information as possible about the context of the problem that was to be studied, the cultural matrices in which it develops and in which the solution presented by the research question is proposed. the second step of the framework involved the selection of the participants in the data collection through a careful cross-over of expertise and experience and the analysis of the cues provided to us by their professional role and the activities in which they themselves were involved in contact with and direct observation of the children, focal object of study.

The third step concerned the collation of qualitative data such as information, opinions, narratives, personal and professional experiences using the ZMET, Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique as a technique, which in my opinion is the best deep interviewing technique that can be used for the purpose of my research , which uses an external point of view on the application of the solution and elicits what are normally ignored elements in traditional interviews such as

imagination, body language while having to carry out small activities with the images that they themselves have provided me, the choice same visual and sensorial images that could express concepts or proposals and so on.

Finally, the last step concerned the analysis of the data collected through coding, a qualitative research technique used to analyze and categorize the data collected from interviews. It involves systematically identifying and labeling specific themes, concepts, patterns, or ideas within the interview transcripts. Coding helps researchers organize the data and extract meaningful insights that address research objectives or research questions; it is a rigorous process that requires careful attention to detail and a deep understanding of the interview data. It helps transform raw interview text into organized and meaningful information, allowing researchers to draw conclusions and insights that contribute to the research objectives.

### **The behavioral intervention**

Interviewees selected for the study were presented with two distinct versions of the same restaurant menu: the original menu and a modified version with the behavioral intervention under examination. The core of this intervention involved introducing a generic superhero as a prominent spokesperson alongside the healthy menu option among the two choices. This visual alteration was designed to enable participants to immediately grasp the contrast and evaluate, based on their experiences and perspectives, whether the inclusion of the superhero, coupled with an engaging title relevant to the character, could function as an effective nudge. Specifically, the goal was to determine if this graphical intervention could persuade children to opt for the healthier food choice over the less nutritious alternative. This graphical intervention served as the foundational point of departure for our interviews, ensuring that participants had a comprehensive and unambiguous understanding of the task at hand before delving into the examination of visual materials.

Below are presented the two menus showed to the participants:

## ORIGINAL MENU



## MENU WITH INTERVENTION



## Ethical Considerations and Impact

As custodians of narratives, researchers must navigate ethical considerations related to privacy, consent, representation, and cultural sensitivity. Respecting the voices and experiences of those sharing narratives is paramount to maintaining ethical integrity.

Narratives wield the power to challenge prevailing norms, highlight marginalized voices, and shape collective perceptions. By analyzing narratives, researchers contribute to discourse transformation and social change, amplifying voices that might otherwise remain unheard.

in this regard, the use of the data collected during the research was released in a consensual way and informed by the participants, through a consent form for the recording of the voices themselves during the interview and through the verbal expression of consent at the conclusion of the requests. [see Appendices & References]

In conclusion, the narrative-based theoretical framework adopted in this study provides a foundation that values the significance of narratives as more than just stories. It acknowledges narratives as repositories of knowledge, insights, and meaning, capable of deepening our understanding of complex human experiences. By embracing narratives, this study aims to unravel the layers of the chosen research question and shed light on the nuanced aspects that quantitative analyses might overlook.

### 3.2 – Participants' selection: the Lens Model of Judgments.

The Lens Model of Judgment is a psychological framework that seeks to explain how individuals make judgments and decisions based on incomplete or ambiguous information. Proposed by Egon Brunswik in the mid-20th century, the model draws upon the concept of ecological validity, emphasizing the importance of understanding the relationship between the cues available in the environment and the inferences people make from those cues.

In the Lens Model, judgments are formed by evaluating multiple cues that are associated with a particular target or outcome. These cues can be both directly observable and inferred, and they are often subject to varying levels of reliability. The model introduces the concept of "cue validity" and "cue utilization" to describe how individuals weigh the importance of different cues and how well those cues predict the target. The model has found applications in various fields, including psychology, decision-making, and human-computer interaction, offering insights into how people gather information, process it, and arrive at conclusions in real-world situations.

In the realm of decision-making and human judgment, the Lens Model of Judgments has emerged as a foundational framework for comprehending how individuals process information and arrive at judgments in various contexts. The model underscores the significance of understanding the interplay between available cues and the cognitive interpretations drawn from those cues.

This paragraph provides an overview of the Model and elucidates its role in shaping the methodology and rationale behind the selection of participants for this research endeavor.

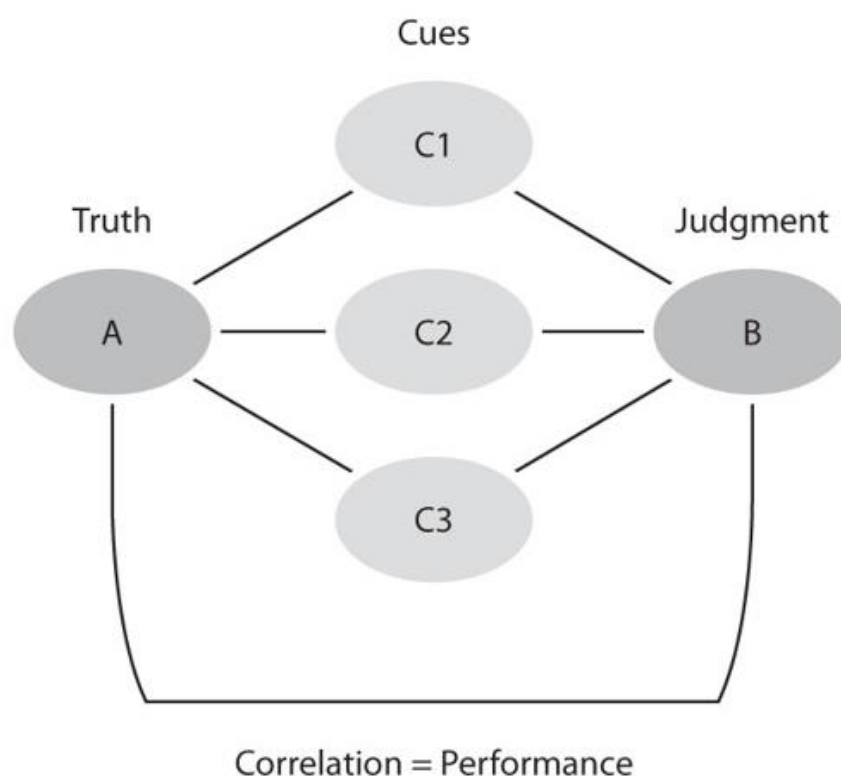
1. **Identify the Decision or Judgment:** Start by clearly defining the decision or judgment you want to analyze. This could be anything from predicting a customer's purchasing behavior to assessing a student's performance in an educational setting.
2. **Identify Relevant Cues:** Identify the cues or pieces of information that individuals might use to make their judgment or decision. These cues can be both objective and subjective, ranging from observable data to personal beliefs.
3. **Assess Cue Validity and Utilization:** Evaluate the validity and reliability of each cue. How well does each cue correlate with the desired outcome or target? Additionally, consider how individuals are likely to use these cues. Are some cues given more weight than others? Are there cues that might be ignored or underutilized?
4. **Gather Data:** Collect data on the cues and the actual judgments or decisions made by individuals. This could involve observing real-world behavior, conducting surveys, or analyzing historical data.

5. **Compare Predictions to Actual Outcomes:** Compare the predictions or judgments made using the cues to the actual outcomes. This step helps you assess the accuracy of the judgments and identify any discrepancies.
6. **Analyze Discrepancies:** If there are discrepancies between predicted and actual outcomes, delve into why these discrepancies occurred. Were certain cues overemphasized? Were there cues that were missed but turned out to be crucial?
7. **Iterate and Refine:** Based on your analysis, refine the model by adjusting cue weights, considering additional cues, or modifying the way individuals utilize cues. Iterate this process to create a more accurate model over time.
8. **Apply Insights:** Use the insights gained from the analysis to improve decision-making processes. This could involve optimizing strategies, designing interventions, or adjusting communication to better align with how people interpret cues.
9. **Consider Context:** Keep in mind that the effectiveness of the Lens Model can vary depending on the context. Factors such as the complexity of the decision, the availability of cues, and individual differences can all influence its application.
10. **Learn and Adapt:** As you continue to apply the Lens Model, learn from its successes and shortcomings. Adapt the model based on new information and feedback, continuously refining your understanding of how people make judgments and decisions.

This study leverages the insights offered by the Lens Model to illuminate the participant selection process. By identifying and evaluating cues that could influence potential participants' engagement and responses, the Lens Model was employed as a guiding paradigm to ensure a holistic and ecologic approach to participant selection with the final aim to use valid but differentiated insights for answering the research question.

In many situations in life, we need to make judgments – or predictions – about properties of objects or people that are not observable at the time of making the judgment. There are two specific cases in which such judgments need to be made. First, we often need to judge an object or a person on a feature that is inherently impossible to observe and measure. Second, we might need to make judgments about the future behavior of an object or person based on the data at hand. The realm of this study lies in the second case of unobservables since the research wants to study how children react to the use of a specific behavioral intervention but, for the actual starting point of the research, it doesn't involve the presence of children – already studied in the inspirational paper explained at the beginning of this writing – but collects data through existing literature and in-depth interviews conducted with the so-called “good judges”.

How do people make these judgments? One of the earliest models used to capture these forms of judgments comes to us from a branch of psychology known as Social Judgment Theory. As the name suggests, the theory was developed to help us understand how individuals make decisions in a social setting. In its central paradigm, judgments are assumed to result from the integration of different “cues” or sources of perceptual information from the environment. This paradigm leads us to the Lens Model, illustrated by the figure below.



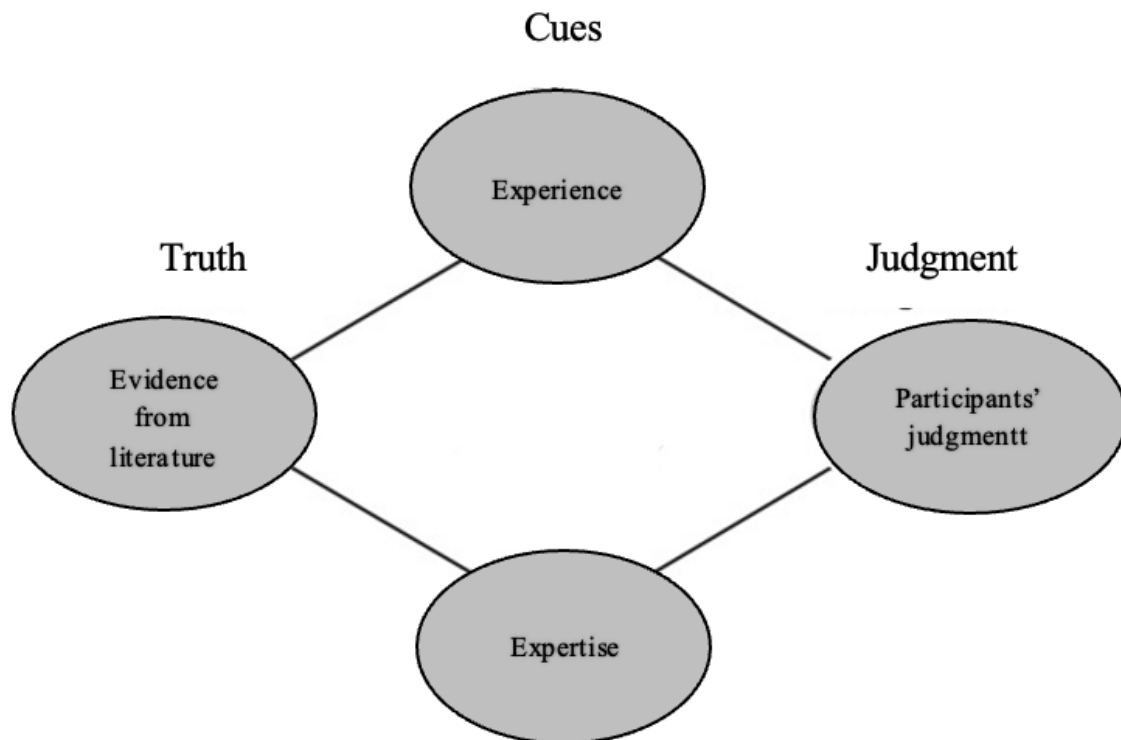
Before diving deeper into the model and its implications, it is important to establish that in a representation of the lens model, the term “truth” is used to identify the variable the person is trying to make a prediction or a judgment about. Since the truth is not observable, either because of the nature of the variable or because it will only be knowable sometime in the future, there are many pieces of information in the environment that could be used to make an inference about the truth. In the lens model figure, these pieces of information are called “cues.”

Finally, how good is the judgment? While it will never be possible to know the quality of the judgment for any one particular judgment, we could perhaps come up with a measure of how good a judgment is overall. In order to do this, we use a simple concept from statistics called correlation. A correlation refers to a statistical variable that captures the relationship between two strings of data. A correlation of +1 suggests that there is a perfect relationship between the two sets of data such that one set can perfectly predict the other set. A correlation of -1 again suggests that one set of data can perfectly predict the second set, but in the opposite direction. A correlation



of 0 implies that there is no way of predicting the performance of either string of data by looking at the other one.

In this model, after research in literature that explains what is needed to make a behavioral intervention with children - experience and expertise ended up being the right cues to evaluate the effectiveness and validity of the decision-making process and judgments of the participants involved in ZMET interviews.



Focusing on the right-hand side of the lens model we could run a regression that looks at participants' judgment as a function of the two cues across the different reactions of children they have observed during their professional and academic paths.

If we imagine that we had a “judgment machine” that would mimic the participants' judgment process, the resulting regression equation might look like this:

$$\text{Judgment} = A + b_1 * \text{Cue}_1 + b_2 * \text{Cue}_2 + b_3 * \text{Cue}_3$$

After making comparisons between highlights coming from the scientific literature and pieces of evidence taken from participants' narratives about whether the use of cartoonized spokescharacters would be effective nudges to persuade children's preferences towards healthier food options, this research found interestingly that their judgment machine produced more accurate predictions than them as judges themselves and then scientific findings.

This finding takes us back to the reason why this study was conducted comparing the literature contributions to the opinions and judgments of individuals that have experience and expertise, given by their job or by their life choices for example being a mother or a volunteer scout leader: a holistic, accurate and wide multi-perspective on the topic.

## THE UNIQUE ROLE OF INTUITION

When considering expert assessments, whether they come from managers, physicians, scientists, or financial analysts, a notable characteristic is their tendency to be made swiftly, drawing upon extensive experience and practical knowledge. These rapid and well-practiced judgments are frequently described as intuitions.

What exactly is intuition? According to the definition from Ken Hammond, “The ordinary meaning of intuition signifies the opposite – a cognitive process that somehow produces an answer, solution, or idea without the use of a conscious, logically defensible step-by-step process.” Hammond emphasizes that intuition is a cognitive process, but that it may not be possible for the expert to provide a step-by-step explanation of how he arrived at the judgment.

In a similar vein, Robin Hogarth said that “the essence of intuition or intuitive responses is that they are reached with little apparent effort, and typically without conscious awareness. They involve little or no conscious deliberation.” Again, this describes the judgment process of experts very well. The reason the experts can make these judgments with little effort is that they have – over the course of their many years of experience – learned complex patterns of interrelationships between cues and the truth. In the language used in this chapter, they have developed a relatively reliable model of how the cues interact to predict the truth.

This is something really interesting that this study has highlighted, and it is worth a brief explanation. Although the interviewees had been selected on the basis of their proven ability to elaborate an opinion on behavioral intervention, the direct answer to the research question posed first in the interview and subsequently also last, after the entire discussion of the topic, was in all cases affirmative, namely that cartoon spokescharacters as nudges are effective in directing children's food choices. At the same time, however, as will be explained in detail in the results of the textual analysis of the transcripts, the result derived from their narrations of the moments lived with the children, from the observation they carried out over time and in their hypotheses of what could actually be engaging for a child in a restaurant menu was completely different from their direct intuition. The insights, the arguments, the scientific evidence observed in the daily work on the children themselves, and the small intuitions they dedicated to each of the images brought to the ZMET were perfect pieces of a particularly enlightening and very professional puzzle. But it

is here that the judgment machines in most cases are more effective and accurate than the judgments formulated by the judges themselves. There is a simple reason why this happens. Experts are great at knowing what information is relevant and are also fantastic at identifying how these cues should be combined and what weighting to use. However, these judgment models are often paramorphic – that is, people don't actually sit down with a paper and pencil and calculate the scores. This is the very point where experts can make mistakes due to their lack of mathematical consistency. Experts can become fatigued and susceptible to distractions. If you assign an expert a math task, even a relatively simple one with many numbers involved, you'll observe that they may struggle with accurately combining those numbers. This is where the judgment machine helps.

### **3.3 – Data collection method: qualitative research through ZMET Method.**

In this study, data was collected through the innovative ZMET (Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique) interview method. ZMET is a qualitative research approach that delves deep into the subconscious perceptions and emotions of participants by exploring their metaphors and visualizations related to the research topic. By utilizing this method, we were able to uncover rich and nuanced insights that go beyond surface-level responses, providing a holistic understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences.

The Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique, commonly referred to as ZMET, is a patented and sophisticated market research tool developed by Dr. Gerald Zaltman during the early 1990s, originating from his academic work at the esteemed Harvard Business School. ZMET is distinguished by its ability to probe not only individuals' overt, conscious thoughts but also, of particular significance, their latent and subconscious cognitions: in fact, this innovative method is designed to uncover these deeper cognitive layers by means of exploring individuals' employment of non-literal or metaphorical expressions.

ZMET proceeds through a meticulously structured process, beginning with in-depth, one-on-one interviews. During these interviews, participants are encouraged to share their visual and sensory imagery, often conveyed through the presentation of pictures or other visual stimuli. These visual cues serve as catalysts, enabling participants to articulate the metaphors, constructs, and mental models that underpin their thought processes and behaviors. The emphasis on visual and sensory elements is integral to the ZMET approach, as it transcends the confines of verbal communication, thereby accessing the rich tapestry of subconscious associations and emotions that inform decision-making, opinions, and preferences.

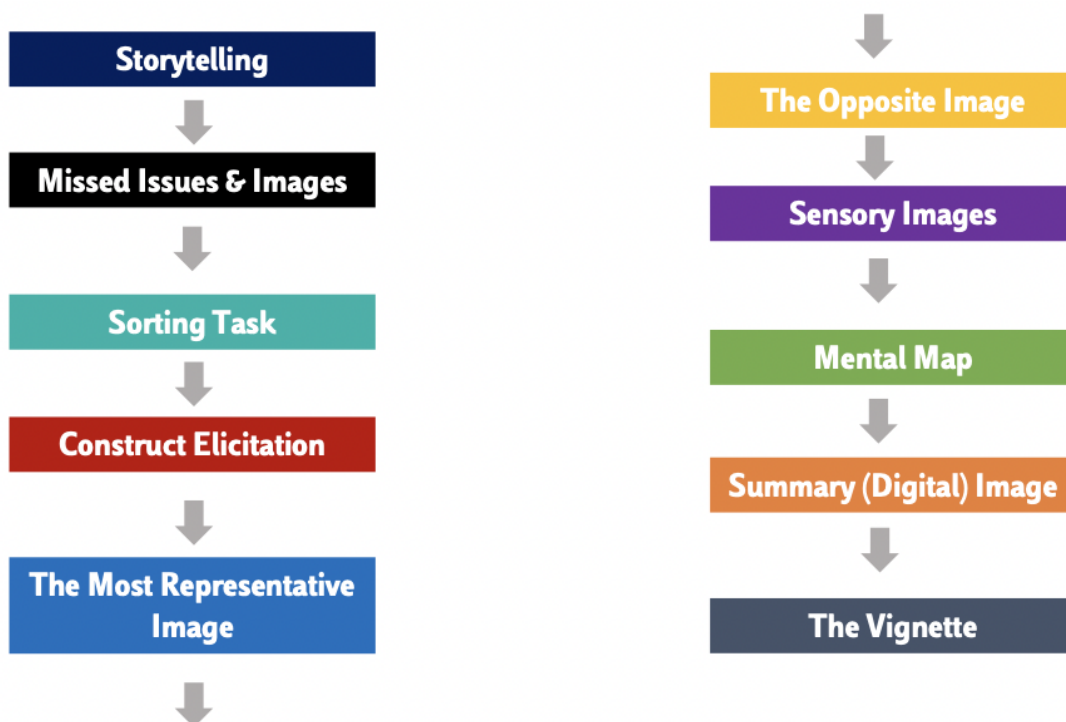
In essence, ZMET is an invaluable tool in market research, enabling researchers to uncover not only what individuals consciously express but also the hidden dimensions of their thoughts and feelings, which play a pivotal role in shaping their perceptions and actions in the marketplace.

The research follows these steps:

1. **Data Collection and Analysis:** Our research methodology involves the systematic collection and analysis of unstructured data derived from respondents. This data comprises textual responses and in the case of ZMET (Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique), visual and sensory imagery. This process continues until discernible patterns and recurrent instances emerge from the data.
2. **Pattern Identification:** Subsequently, we diligently scrutinize the collected data to identify recurring patterns and themes. This rigorous analysis allows us to distill significant insights and discern commonalities among the responses.
3. **Conclusive Findings:** Drawing from the patterns identified and informed by our comprehensive data analysis, we formulate our conclusions. These conclusions are grounded in a rigorous examination of the data and contribute to a deeper understanding of the research topic or problem under investigation.

This structured approach ensures that our research endeavors are characterized by rigor, methodical analysis, and a commitment to extracting meaningful insights from the data collected.

The interviews conducted with the ZMET Method go through the specific and accurate path that follows:



## I. **Storytelling**

Interviewer: Since you have thought about the object of this research for some days, and considering that our memory and our everyday communications are often based on storytelling, can we please analyze together the visual images that you have selected? Can you describe the story behind each picture to me? In other words, can you tell me why and in which way each of the selected picture relates to research question?

*This part of the interview is crucial for the overall success of the research. Interviewees should be made to feel comfortable, knowing that this is a friendly conversation about the research topic. They are encouraged to freely express their thoughts without holding back and to be completely honest. There are no correct or incorrect answers; what truly matters are their genuine opinions, thoughts, and feelings.*

### **2. Missed issues and images**

Interviewer: Please, can you describe each factor that you think might be useful to answer the research questions for which you might not have found any adequate picture, and please can you describe me the type of picture that would have been necessary?

*This part of the interview allows the respondent to consider elements not covered by the selected images.*

### **3. Sorting task**

Interviewer: Now, can you please sort the pictures, in terms of meanings and contents of each one, into different piles? Can you please also give a label or a brief description to each of this group? There are no restrictions on the number of piles or number of pictures to be included in each pile.

*This part of the interview is useful because it helps to establish which are the major themes or constructs relevant to the participant.*

### **4. Construct elicitation**

Interviewer: Now we need to explore the meanings that you identified in a more detailed way. Given one of the piles created in the previous step, we start focusing on this one (pile). Please select within it the two pictures that for you are more similar to each other, and one that you think it is more different from these two with respect to the your opinion about the topic of my research. Why and how are these pictures more similar to each other? What does the similarity mean to you? Why is it relevant? Why is this picture more different from the others? What does the distinction mean for you?

Then, the same exercise is for other piles.

Can you please tell me why you associated these two pictures? How are they similar and in what aspect these two pictures might differ with respect to the factors that from your perspective should be considered successful for the aim of the behavioral intervention?

### **5. Most representative image**

Interviewer: Among the pictures that you have available, which one best represents the features that the behavioral intervention should have to be successful? Why?

*In other terms, participants are asked to identify the picture that, in their view, best exemplifies the attributes that the intervention' should possess to achieve success the aim of persuading children.*

### **6. The opposite image**

Interviewer: Instead, which picture(s) would be more appropriate to express the opposite concept to the one addressed in this research? Please, take your time to reflect, if necessary, try to describe this image(s) in the richest way possible.

### **7. Sensory Images**

Interviewer: Let's do some association between the concepts behind the images you brought up and the 5 senses: taste, color (sight), touch, smell, and sound. Why?

### **8. Mental map and “summary” using images**

Interviewer: Let's do together a summary of the different concepts that emerged during this interview. In your opinion, are these concepts enough to represent the phenomena that we are observing? Is there anything else you would like to add or that came to your mind during our conversation? Additionally, according to you does it exist a particular way in which these concepts that you have considered relate to each other? Let's try to create together a simple map.

### **10. The Vignette**

Interviewer: Finally, can I ask you to imagine and then describe a vignette (story) that would include the features that you think are successful in the approach with children with regard to the intervention? Please in telling this story specify the time of the day, the season, the location, if you are alone or with who you are, and what is happening.

After selecting the participants to be interviewed, they were informed of the research topic, of the background that led to the choice of a specific research question and received a graphic example of what the behavioral intervention at the basis of the study is, proposing a neutral and a modified version of the menus for restaurants. After verifying their understanding of the task, they were asked to collect images that could help build a conceptual discourse on their opinions regarding the effectiveness of the intervention, choosing not only images of characters effective according to them but above all images that exemplified a general concept.

In particular, the modified menu presents a generic superhero alongside the menu made up of healthy products and with a captivating title that refers to the character, namely "The superhero menu" in order to express what they thought the children would choose between the two. [see Appendices & References].

Once the day and time had been chosen, consent was asked for the recording and use of the data provided during the interview for the purposes of the study and the interviews began. Transcripts of all interviews are provided at the end of this paper in the Appendices & References.

### **3.4 – Data analysis method: content analysis through coding.**

Content analysis is a research method used in social sciences and other fields to systematically analyze and interpret the content of textual, visual, or audio materials; it is a structured and systematic approach to studying the content of documents, media, interviews, or any other form of communication.

Key Steps in Content Analysis:

- **Data Collection:** content analysis begins with the collection of data, which can include text, images, videos, or audio recordings. This data can be sourced from various places, such as interviews, surveys, newspapers, social media, or historical documents.

In details, data has been collected through the transcripts of interviews conducted with experienced participants, as professionals or daily life roles, after they have been exposed to a visual example of the intervention proposed and asked the research question of the study. In turn, the interviewees brought to the meeting some graphic material according to the ZMET method which could help them during their speech and which was another very important element in the collection of insights from the interviews, as what was represented allowed me, together with their body language, to fully understand what they believed in most and what they considered less relevant.

- **Coding:** the next step involves creating a set of categories or codes to classify and categorize the content. These codes should be developed based on research questions and objectives. Coders assign specific codes to different segments of the data based on predefined criteria.

The next step involved the transcription of the audio files obtained with the consent of the participants in order to analyze and make an initial categorization of the main themes present in the text, and these, as could be expected from the technique itself used, coincide in macro areas with the themes required by the same questions I asked.

- **Data Coding:** researchers or coders systematically apply the codes to the content. They read or view the material and assign relevant codes to segments of the data. This process can be done manually or with the assistance of software tools designed for content analysis.

Subsequently, the identified macro areas were further divided into segments of smaller and more precise themes that could begin to make a practical and original contribution to the conversation. In some cases, these were very similar among the interviewees, while in others different. The themes were manually divided and collected into coding tables.

- **Data Analysis:** once the coding is complete, researchers analyze the coded data to identify patterns, themes, and trends. Quantitative content analysis may involve statistical techniques to quantify the frequency of specific codes, while qualitative content analysis focuses on understanding the context and meaning of the content.

At this point, as had already been anticipated by the coding of the macro areas, we went on to find patterns and trends between the various interviews, which in fact were in general clearly visible already from the choice of the images proposed and from some truly very similar to each other to precise questions such as the opposite image or the creation of stacks of images related to each other.

- **Interpretation:** in the final stage, researchers interpret the findings, drawing conclusions about the content's meaning and its relevance to the research questions or objectives. After the data analysis, an interpretation of the analysis conducted was provided in the Results & Discussion paragraph, integrating the trend of insights emerging from the interviews.

Content analysis and in-depth interviews like the ones following the ZMET technique are often used together in research to provide a comprehensive understanding of a particular phenomenon. In fact, in-depth interviews are one of the primary sources of data for content analysis. Researchers conduct interviews to gather rich, qualitative data from participants. Then, content analysis of interview transcripts can be used to validate and triangulate findings from in-depth interviews. By analyzing the content, researchers can identify common themes and patterns across interviews, enhancing the credibility of their qualitative findings. Moreover, in-depth interviews provide context and depth to the data, allowing researchers to explore participants' perspectives and experiences in detail. Content analysis complements this by systematically organizing and categorizing the interview data for further analysis.

Below are short summaries of the key points that emerged from the interviews.



AMADIA - Student of Modern Philology and former multi-year Children's Entertainer

Amadia brought six distinct images to the discussion, each carefully selected for specific reasons. Among them, the image of a smiling salad was chosen to bridge the gap between words on a menu and appealing visuals for pre-reading children. The inclusion of the popular YouTuber, Favij, aimed to present an influential figure for children to look up to, especially those aspiring to become YouTubers themselves. PJMASK, known to younger children, represented characters that could serve as examples for the little ones to follow. On the other hand, the Avengers image was intended to attract older children who might be inspired by superheroes. Meanwhile, the McMenù featuring Luca from Disney acted as a dual representation, connecting with idols children follow (Disney characters) and offering a concrete example of characters effectively used on menus. Finally, the dinosaur-shaped pasta utilized the persuasive power of novelty. Amadia's perspective leaned towards the effectiveness of characters on menus, particularly for younger children attracted to recognizable visuals. However, she acknowledged that effectiveness might fluctuate across age groups.

These images were thoughtfully grouped into distinct categories: Inspirational Characters like Favij, PJMASK, and Avengers; Concrete Examples Already in Use, exemplified by McMenù with Luca from Disney; and Techniques of Persuasion, such as the use of dinosaur-shaped pasta. Amadia ranked these groups in order of importance, placing Persuasion Techniques at the forefront, followed by Inspirational Characters and Concrete Examples Already in Use.

While McMenù was considered the most important image, encompassing various aspects of the discussion, Favij among the Inspirational Characters was viewed as the least important.

However, the potential failure of the strategy was identified, emphasizing that a plain menu devoid of colors, characters, or visually appealing elements might render the strategy less effective for children.

Amadia went on to link the images with the five senses, associating visual appeal with PJMASK, scent and association with McMenù, shape with dinosaur-shaped pasta, sound, and power with Avengers and Favij, and taste and food with McMenù.

The discussion also touched upon the importance of tailoring characters to different age groups, with younger children responding more to characters while older ones were influenced by known figures. Nonetheless, unexplored concepts such as the potential impact of gender and age on character preferences were acknowledged but not delved into in detail.

The detailed coding of this interview has been provided in the Appendices at the end of this study.

ROBERTA - Graduate in Sport Sciences and Expert in Posturology, Elementary School Teacher

Roberta's insights shed light on a comprehensive approach to promoting healthier food choices among children, emphasizing the pivotal role that images can play in this endeavor. They advocate that the utilization of images featuring strong and influential characters, particularly superheroes, can prove more efficacious than merely showcasing images of healthy food. The concept of emulation emerges as a potent motivator, with children aspiring to resemble their superhero idols, making healthier food choices a means to that end. This emulation extends to both well-known superheroes and those specially created for the purpose.

Additionally, the interviewee underscores the significance of social interaction and sharing in shaping food choices. Images portraying children sharing snacks and the camaraderie of the Ninja Turtles enjoying pizza together are seen as potent tools for promoting these values.

Incorporating elements of playfulness and games into the menu is touted as another promising strategy. By infusing food selection with an aura of play, children are encouraged to opt for healthier choices while enjoying the process. This playful approach aligns with the understanding that children are naturally drawn to interactive and engaging experiences.

The interviewee goes further by associating various images with the five senses, linking taste to the Ninja Turtles, touch to arm wrestling, sight to children sharing snacks, and sound to Sportacus from Lazy Town, known for its musicality. These sensory connections serve to make food choices more engaging and immersive for children.

Menu content and presentation are pivotal, with the interviewee advocating for imaginative and cartoonish representations of healthy food over realistic yet unappealing depictions. The emphasis lies in making the food visually appealing, capturing the imagination of young diners. Slogans and rhymes emerge as potential tools for enhancing engagement and memorability. The interviewee suggests that incorporating these elements, possibly tied to characters or images, can be an effective way to make healthy food choices resonate with children.

When ranking the importance of concepts, the interviewee posits that the emulation of superheroes should take precedence, followed closely by the integration of playfulness and sharing. Gender relevance is also stressed, with the understanding that character selection should consider the preferences of both girls and boys, recognizing that girls may prefer female superheroes and boys may lean towards male counterparts.

In assessing the effectiveness of characters, the interviewee leans towards the belief that well-known characters, even if not globally famous, can wield more influence than entirely unknown ones in promoting healthy food choices. This underscores the importance of familiarity in captivating children's attention and driving dietary decisions.

In summation, the interviewee's insights collectively underline the potential efficacy of leveraging images, particularly those featuring influential characters and superheroes, as well as injecting playfulness and social interaction into the presentation of healthy food choices on menus. The emphasis on making menu content visually enticing and engaging resonates as a holistic approach to positively impact children's dietary preferences and habits.

The detailed coding of this interview has been provided in the Appendices at the end of this study.

**MARIA TERESA** - Marketing Manager and Mother of two children aged 4 and 8 years.

In her exploration of this topic, Maria Teresa meticulously selected 14 images for a hypothetical modified menu, opting for visuals linked to fruits, vegetables, a superhero-themed salad, and other vegetable-centric depictions. Her rationale behind these choices lay in the belief that associating wholesome foods with cheerful or superhero-themed imagery holds the potential to render them more enticing to children.

Maria Teresa's account further underscores the significant role cartoons and familiar characters play in shaping children's dietary preferences. Her anecdotal evidence reveals that her children, initially hesitant to try certain foods like broccoli, gradually warmed up to them after encountering similar foods in cartoons like Bing and Masha and the Bear. Such instances illuminate the influential sway of animated content in guiding children's food choices.

In the realm of menu item nomenclature, Maria Teresa emphasizes the value of christening dishes in alignment with characters or themes, exemplified by names like "Hulk's pasta" for dishes featuring green vegetables. This practice, she contends, fosters a positive association with healthful foods and heightens their allure for children.

Moreover, Maria Teresa accentuates the importance of creating an inviting dining ambiance for families through elements like games, vibrant seating, and child-friendly dining utensils. These factors contribute significantly to the overall comfort and enjoyment of the dining experience for young patrons, thereby further influencing their food choices.

The interview also touches upon the disparities in food offerings between public and private schools, with Maria Teresa highlighting the deficit of healthy options and fresh fruits in public schools, while private institutions tend to promote the consumption of legumes and vegetables. This observation underscores the significance of school menus in shaping children's dietary habits.

Delving into sensory associations, Maria Teresa draws intriguing connections between specific images and the five senses, attributing visual appeal to emojis, taste to sandwiches, and scent to

cooked ham. These sensory linkages can potentially enhance the overall dining experience for children.

Maria Teresa's recounting of her children's preference for healthier options like Actimel yogurt at McDonald's due to the appealing packaging design serves as a real-life testament to the effectiveness of visually engaging food presentation in steering food choices.

In conclusion, the interview with Maria Teresa unveils the multifaceted effectiveness of utilizing cartoonized spokescharacters on restaurant menus as a tool to foster healthier food selections among children. It emphasizes the importance of visual appeal, character-themed menu items, and the creation of a positive dining environment replete with games and amenities. Through Maria Teresa's experiences and insights, this analysis offers a compelling perspective on the potential success of such an approach in promoting healthier eating habits among children.

The detailed coding of this interview has been provided in the Appendices at the end of this study.

CONCETTA – Psychologist active in the Lu.Do Policenter - Polyspecialist Center in Acerra (NA), a multifunctional center specialized in speech therapy, neuropsychomotor skills, educational support, and DSA.

In this comprehensive discussion, Concetta thoroughly examines the profound influence of visual stimuli, with a particular focus on the compelling role of images in shaping children's behavior. She underscores the significance of visual cues as powerful tools that significantly mold children's preferences and responses, particularly in the context of dietary choices. Moreover, Concetta delves into the positive impact of cartoon characters as instrumental figures in promoting healthier food choices among children. She illustrates this point with examples from popular animations like "Ratatouille" and "Lady and the Tramp," showcasing how these cartoons effectively encourage children to embrace nutritious foods.

Intriguingly, the conversation highlights the pivotal role of cartoons in shaping children's perceptions of food, rendering it more appealing and approachable. Specifically, Concetta highlights Winnie the Pooh as an exemplary role model for imparting essential table manners and etiquette to children. The interview also delves into the multifaceted ways in which cartoons can serve as educational tools, imparting valuable life lessons, including the importance of adhering to rules and etiquette during meals.

Moreover, the dialogue explores the complexities surrounding food selectivity, especially in children with various disorders, elucidating how such challenges can profoundly impact their dietary habits. Concetta offers valuable insights into strategies for introducing new foods in a gradual, accommodating manner, often relying on the potency of images and visuals as aids. She

further underscores the critical importance of transitioning children towards embracing a diverse array of foods, emphasizing its far-reaching implications for their holistic development.

Concetta's expertise extends to the realm of menu design, where she provides compelling considerations for crafting menus that effectively promote healthier food choices. Her insights emphasize the importance of visually captivating menus that engage children's imaginations and preferences. Additionally, she intriguingly suggests the incorporation of positive reinforcement mechanisms, such as toys or rewards, within menus, further enhancing their effectiveness in encouraging nutritious choices.

Finally, the interview critically evaluates the least representative image, "Doraemon," within the context of promoting healthy food choices. It provides a nuanced examination of why this image may not be ideally suited for the intended purpose, offering a well-rounded view of the overall discussion.

The detailed coding of this interview has been provided in the Appendices at the end of this study.

SERENA - Sociology graduate and former community scout leader

Serena's observations encompass various facets of this intriguing topic. Firstly, she emphasizes the persuasive impact of familiar cartoon characters such as Superman, Spider-Man, and Barbie. She posits that children's deep identification with these iconic figures significantly enhances the likelihood of them selecting menu items associated with these beloved characters. Furthermore, she dives into the complexities of age and gender considerations, recognizing that these factors profoundly shape children's preferences for specific cartoon characters. Serena underscores the importance of tailoring menus to align with these varying tastes and interests, acknowledging that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be as effective.

Additionally, Serena introduces the concept of incorporating surprise elements into menus, taking inspiration from the well-known Happy Meals. She suggests that the allure of packaging with hidden surprises inside can be a powerful enticement for children, potentially influencing their dining choices. She also champions the idea of featuring cartoon characters consuming healthy foods, citing examples like Winnie the Pooh relishing vegetables. By showcasing these characters in the act of making nutritious choices, she envisions a positive impact on children's own decisions regarding healthier menu options.

Moreover, Serena delves into innovative strategies such as coloring menus and incorporating game-like elements. She believes that engaging children through interactive menus can not only enhance their dining experience but also encourage them to make more wholesome food choices. Lastly, she underscores the significance of aesthetics and presentation. Serena suggests that

visually appealing dishes and menus can have a powerful influence on a child's decision-making process, further enhancing the overall dining experience.

In summary, Serena's insights culminate in the compelling notion that incorporating cartoon characters on restaurant menus can be an effective strategy, particularly for younger children who are more impressionable. She envisions an anti-child menu as one stripped of colors, characterized by complicated characters, and devoid of appealing visuals, underscoring the importance of visual appeal in engaging young diners and encouraging healthier choices. Her multifaceted perspective on this subject contributes significantly to the ongoing discourse surrounding children's dining habits and the potential for positive change through creative menu design. The detailed coding of this interview has been provided in the Appendices at the end of this study.

## **Results & Discussion.**

The analysis conducted in this study following a narrative-based theoretical framework starts from the research question presented at the beginning as a research objective and as a guideline for the interviews carried out: "How effective is the use of 'cartoonized' spokescharacters on restaurant menus as nudges to influence children's food choices and preferences towards healthier options?"

An integrated analysis of the data collected by analyzing the already existing literature - even if scarce and not very specific for application to restaurant menus - and by conducting in-depth interviews allows us to formulate an initial answer to the research question. Based on studies conducted by academics and marketers it can be concluded that the use of "cartoonized" spokescharacters on restaurant menus has the potential to be an effective nudge to influence children's food choices and preferences toward healthier options. Here are the key points to support this conclusion:

- **Role of Spokespersons:** literature highlights the significant role of spokespersons in conveying a service's message to the public. Spokespersons can shape how individuals perceive and interact with a product or service.
- **Types of Spokespersons:** along with the various types of spokespeople discussed, "spokescharacters" are introduced as fictional animated beings used for promotional purposes. They offer benefits such as consistency and control over the message, which can be particularly appealing to children.

- **Leveraging Cognitive Biases:** literature mentions cognitive biases, including the "mere-exposure effect" or familiarity bias. Spokescharacters can leverage this bias by creating a sense of familiarity and preference among children, making healthier options more appealing.
- **Influence on Preferences:** research suggests that media characters, including cartoon characters, can influence taste perceptions and snack choices among children. Familiar and likable characters can create positive associations with food products.
- **Age and Decision-Making:** it is acknowledged that the impact of menu modifications and the use of cartoon characters can vary based on children's age, with younger children being more influenced. This suggests that using spokescharacters may be particularly effective for younger diners.
- **Effective Nudging Techniques:** this study explores the effectiveness of various nudging techniques, and the use of cartoon characters aligns with the principles of nudging. Nudges are designed to make desired choices more appealing and guide individuals toward better decisions.

In summary, the use of cartoonized spokescharacters on restaurant menus appears to be a promising strategy for nudging children toward healthier food choices. Moreover, if we consider insights coming from interviews, the initial response would not be different from the one coming from literature.

Key topics emerging from Amadia's interview are common with literature: Visual Appeal and Familiarity, representation of Idols and Inspirational Figures to serve as role models, the example of McDonald's use of characters from popular movies to attract children to its menus, Importance of Character Recognition since well-known characters tend to be more effective in influencing children's choices.

Similarly, key topics of Roberta's interview are the Importance of Emulation where children want to emulate superheroes and cartoon characters, the matter of Avoiding Realistic and Unattractive Representations in favor of Cartoon-like representations that make healthy foods visually more appealing, in particular the Sharing and Social element in scenes such as children eating together happily.

Maria Teresa also highlights in her interviews the Positive Impact of Cartoonized Characters since her children seem to be more attracted to menus that feature these characters, in particular elements like Emojis, images of fruits and vegetables with happy emoji-like expressions. She also brings up the example of her son that started to choose Actimel yogurt over a sugary drink at McDonald's due to the attractive character on the packaging. The interviewee also emphasizes

the importance of Naming Dishes creatively, associating them with the qualities of the characters represented.

Concetta in her role of a psychologist also supports the general idea that the intervention is effective thanks to the Power of Images: children are highly receptive to images, and images have a strong impact on their memory and preferences. Moreover, certain cartoon characters and images can create positive associations with healthy foods like for example Ratatouille with vegetables. The element of Emotional Engagement is important since images that evoke emotions and engagement can make children more inclined towards some meals, together with Healthy Food Promotion through the emphasis on their colors and flavors. The importance of Engaging Menus with images that make them excited about the food using characters and vibrant colors to also assist in transitioning picky eaters.

Finally, Serena has a positive attitude towards the characters' efficacy thanks to the Identification with Cartoons of children who choose menu options featuring their favorite cartoon characters and children may be influenced to eat healthier food if they see their favorite characters in cartoons consuming healthy foods. For example, characters eating vegetables could encourage children to do the same. Moreover, Famous Characters Have a Greater Impact than generic superheroes, and the Aesthetics and Visual Appeal of cartoons create emotional connections with children.

However, if we analyze deeper and better arguments in the interviews as well as the insights coming from scientific literature, we can notice that the complete answer to the research question is a bit different: spokescharacters on restaurant menus as nudges are effective only if tailored to the target children we want to reach and only if designed together and in collaboration with other nudges. In detail, Age-Dependent Effectiveness has been a common theme for every single interview: the effectiveness of cartoon characters on menus may vary based on the age group of children. Younger children tend to be more influenced by characters, while older children may be more influenced by real-life figures. Similarly, it is fundamental that characters chosen are specifically designed on Gender and Personal Preferences since some children may be more drawn to characters or themes that align with their interests and gender stereotypes; for example, gender-specific characters, such as Barbie for girls or Dragon Ball for boys, can have a greater impact on children of a specific gender. However, a clever strategy might be also designing the menu for both genders, using a mix of male and female characters that may be more effective in appealing to a broader audience.

In addition, the most common theme the most recurring theme of the discussion is that of the Multisensory Experience that children need to live when choosing a food option: visual elements



(colors and shapes) play a significant role in attracting children to certain foods; the sensory experience of food, including its smell and taste, can also influence choices; the use of visuals (sight) and sound (associated with characters and songs from cartoons) can enhance the effectiveness of the strategy; the tactile experience of opening a surprise package.

Another topic of great interest that has been explored is the crucial element of Play and Imagination since children tend to respond positively to games and imaginative elements. A balanced approach is essential: while superhero characters and emulation may be the most important, incorporating elements of play, sharing, and multi-sensory experiences can provide a holistic strategy. Providing games or activities for children in restaurants helps in making the dining experience more enjoyable and keeps children engaged, as well as a the Positive Reinforcement offered by the rewards incorporated into the menu like Happy Meals include a toy in their packages.

### **Conclusion.**

In summary, the use of cartoonized spokescharacters on restaurant menus can be effective in influencing children's food choices and preferences only when combined with side elements that complete the consumption experience of the child. The key is to engage children's senses and emotions to make healthier options more appealing through surprises and colorful aesthetics, to tailor menu strategies to different age groups and gender preferences to enhance the effectiveness of this nudge technique, to create multisensory experiences creating a visually appealing, imaginative, and engaging menu that incorporates elements of emulation, play, and social interaction, while also utilizing the appeal of songs or slogans or the engagement of games.

To conclude, a further interesting finding to which the comparison between scientific literature and interview participants led is the confirmation of Brunswick's theory explored earlier in this study, the Lens Model of Judgments. As can be seen from the arguments in the interviews, which correspond almost entirely to the arguments put forward by scholars and marketers who have conducted real scientific experiments and studies, the human being, thanks to experience and intuition, is perfectly capable of elaborating a judgment machine that includes all the crucial elements for the formulation of an informed conclusion. If we were only to use the judgment machine that the participants in the study developed with all the cues from their examination of the images brought in, we would come to the same conclusion as in this study, namely that spokescharacters are only effective for the purpose if accompanied by all the other side elements mentioned above.

Instead, the human being, despite using perfect logic, then gets lost when it comes to 'doing the calculations' and formulating the final thesis without realizing all the different ideas that have emerged in its own reasoning. For this reason, all participants gave a final and definitive answer to the research question stating that spokescharacters alone are effective nudges to direct children's food choices towards healthier options.

## **Appendices & References.**

### ◇ INTERVIEWS TRANSCRIPTS

#### **AMADIA**

**Federica:** Buongiorno a tutti, sono Federica Petrella, studentessa di marketing alla Luiss Guido Carli e sto conducendo un progetto di ricerca per la mia tesi incentrato sull'utilizzo degli spokescharacters o portavoce “cartoonizzati” sui menu dei ristoranti come nudge per promuovere scelte alimentari più salutari tra i bambini. Oggi sono qui con Amadia del Pennino, studentessa di filologia moderna alla Federico II con un'esperienza pluriennale nell'ambito dell'animazione per bambini. Oggi iniziamo l'intervista per la quale la partecipante ha ricevuto una serie di istruzioni e linee guida da seguire sul topic della mia ricerca e le ho chiesto di fare delle fotografie o raccogliere delle immagini che potessero rispondere alla mia esigenza di comprendere l'efficacia dell'intervento, attraverso l'espressione dei suoi pensieri ed opinioni. La figura rappresenta l'ipotetico menù modificato con un supereroe generico che ho presentato ai partecipanti qualche giorno prima dell'intervista, al fine di avere un'idea chiara di ciò che avrebbero dovuto commentare. Allora quante immagini mi hai portato?

**Amadia:** Dovrebbero essere 6.

**Federica:** Ok. Raccontami, descrivimi in poche parole cosa c'è in ogni immagine e la motivazione per cui le hai portate.

**Amadia:** Allora io ho portato 6 immagini perché appunto mi avevi chiesto se fosse importante l'introduzione di elementi per bambini all'interno dei menu eccetera, tutte queste cose qua e io ho scelto prima di tutto un'immagine che rappresenta proprio un menu. In base alla mia esperienza, campo estivo, animazione ecc. Mi sono resa conto che sì, è vero, spesso per i bambini serve una motivazione o qualcosa vicino, che ne so. In questo caso sul menù c'è scritto “insalata” e c'è l'immagine dell'insalata vicino. Questo può essere importante sia perché, non lo so, la faccina dell'insalata che ride può essere utile per i bambini, sia perché magari ci sono anche i bambini

che non sanno ancora leggere o scrivere e quindi è importante associare magari alla parola scritta sul menù anche un'immagine, in modo che il bambino vede l'insalata oppure vede il panino dice "sì, voglio il panino, voglio le patatine, voglio l'insalata" ai genitori, quindi diciamo che questa in generale era per far capire che sì, per me è importante. Poi ci sono altri fattori che bisogna tenere in considerazione, e che cioè i bambini di oggi non sono più quelli della nostra generazione. Noi eravamo un po' più associati al fatto delle immagini, come, che ne so, vedo la principessa sul menù allora dico "oh questa principessa mangia questo panino oppure mangia questo tipo di piatto, allora vuol dire che io per essere principessa devo mangiare lo stesso piatto" oppure la stessa cosa facevano i bambini per i supereroi. Questa cosa può funzionare ancora per alcuni bambini, tutt'oggi però dipende dalle fasce d'età. Questo perché con l'introduzione dei social e soprattutto di Youtube, come sappiamo, con l'introduzione dei famosi youtuber, i bambini tendono a seguire più loro come mentori, diciamo, come spunto, piuttosto che cartoni animati, che per loro già sono fittizi. Per loro vedere il cartone animato fino magari a 6 anni può essere ancora associato a un qualcosa di veritiero, però poi subito dopo capiscono che non è più la realtà, ma finzione. Invece, vedendo una persona cioè fondamentalmente un ragazzo come loro, aspirano a diventare appunto uno youtuber oppure una fashion blogger, e dicono "se fa questa cosa vuol dire che io, per diventare come loro, devo fare anch'io questa cosa" Ed è per questo che ho portato, vabbè, l'emblema, l'unico youtuber che conosco io personalmente che è Favij. Lui fa video mi sembra sui videogiochi ed è molto seguito da fasce che veramente vanno da età più piccole a età più grandi e riesce ad influenzare davvero tanto. Non solo perché lui, appunto, li porta in questo mondo dei videogiochi, e quindi tutti i bambini interessati ai videogiochi seguono questa cosa, ma poi perché lo vedono, appunto come emblema, come persona da seguire, un modello da imitare. Ah poi il fatto delle fasce di età diverse, cioè i bambini fino a 6 anni, riescono ancora ad essere assoggettati, diciamo a quelli che sono i cartoni animati ed è per questo che ho portato i PJMASK, i famosi Pigiadini e che io ho conosciuto al campo estivo grazie proprio ai bambini e loro venivano vicino a me, dicevano proprio "questa è la maglietta dei pigiadini" oppure "questo è il panino che mangiano i pigiadini Eh?" E quindi ho detto vabbè mettiamola perché appunto li ho conosciuti sempre tramite bambini. Poi vabbè un po' più grandi seguono gli Avengers, perché vedono appunto l'ispirazione se cominciano a leggere, per esempio, i fumetti e quindi già un'altra ispirazione che possono usare, oppure i film che vanno molto, cioè è tutto basato penso sul cosa vada al momento.

**Federica:** Secondo te questa differenza può coincidere col fatto che hai detto prima, realtà/finzione, che magari i cartoni sono finti e...

**Amadia:** Sì, e le persone sono vere, invece loro si riescono ad immedesimare di più, magari in una persona reale che vedono piuttosto che nel personaggio, cosa che possono fare i bambini più

piccoli. Invece i più grandi già capiscono la differenza, cioè capiscono che loro non sono un cartone. Un'altra cosa che appunto serve ad avvalorare la tesi, diciamo, è quello che fa il McDonald's, per esempio, che utilizza spesso i McMenù oppure appunto l'Happy Meal che mette personaggi del momento, come per esempio in questo caso c'è Luca del film di animazione della Disney, che appunto cioè mette i personaggi all'interno come sorpresa, però serve comunque per far capire, cioè il bambino vede il menu con sopra Luca e dice "Oh, io ho visto il film di Luca, il coso di Luca, voglio prendere l'happy meal con Luca perché mi esce il personaggio da dentro". L'ultima cosa invece è più un'esperienza personale, cioè l'ho scelta più per esperienza personale, ovvero la pasta a forma di dinosauro. Perché i bambini, specie quelli più piccolini, quando loro non vogliono mangiare qualcosa, riesci a fargliela mangiare in base a quello che gli presenti davanti, in questo caso la pasta, c'è qualche bambino magari che dice no, io non voglio la pasta in un determinato modo, tu gli porti i dinosauri, dici guarda, questa è la pasta dei dinosauri, serve per diventare un archeologo famosissimo, se tu mangi questo dinosauro, saprai che questo dinosauro faceva queste determinate cose oppure faceva altre determinate cose

**Federica:** Quindi è come se tu potessi, attraverso la forma del cibo romanzare...

**Amadia:** Esatto. sta qui il punto in base alla mia esperienza, il romanzare le cose per i bambini, cioè i bambini più vedono una cosa interessante e più sono spinti a seguire quella determinata cosa, per esempio c'era un bambino al campo estivo che non voleva mangiare la pasta con le verdure. Non voleva e non voleva. Un giorno c'era il menù fisso è un piatto era pasta con le zucchine. Questo bambino non aveva mai mangiato le zucchine appena le vedeva a casa, gli veniva da rovesciare eccetera. Comunque, ho detto al cuoco di far frullare le zucchine. Arriva questa pasta di colore verde, con questa salsa verde e io comincio a dire ai bambini mangiate, questa è la pasta di Hulk. Un giorno dicevo di Hulk, oppure un giorno dicevo queste di dinosauri. Ho sempre associato al fatto dei dinosauri, perché c'era un bambino che era fissatissimo al campo estivo con i dinosauri. E quindi io comincio a dire guarda, questa è la pasta, è fatta con le squame di dinosauro, tutte storielle per convincerlo e alla fine questo bambino ha mangiato pasta con le zucchine. Quando la mamma è venuta a prenderlo ha detto "ma come, lui non ha mai mangiato le zucchine in vita sua come avete fatto? Come siete riusciti a convincerlo?" abbiamo raccontato la storiella e ha detto devo usare anch'io queste tecniche a casa.

**Federica:** La pazienza. Adesso pensa a tutto quello. A tutta la preparazione che hai fatto in questi giorni per arrivare a questi concetti. C'è qualche concetto che avresti voluto dire, esprimere, per cui però non hai trovato delle immagini che ti aiutassero a rappresentarlo?

**Amadia:** Ehm, non penso. Penso sia stato un po' tutto riassuntivo, cioè tutte le immagini che ho scelto erano sufficienti, diciamo ad esprimere quello che era il mio pensiero su sulla domanda che mi era stata posta e sul pensiero che dovevo sviluppare.

**Federica:** Adesso pensa a tutte le immagini che hai portato, ordinarle fra di loro in base a, non so, magari a quanto sono connesse fra loro, oppure se rappresentano lo stesso concetto o simileecc... un significato che tu scegli, le metti insieme e facciamo dei gruppi

**Amadia:** OK vabbè allora praticamente Favij, i pigiamini e gli Avengers diciamo sono collegati tra di loro sempre per una questione relativa al personaggio che viene preso in considerazione. il menu con le faccine è collegato al Mc Menù...

**Federica:** ricordiamoci un attimo come nomini i gruppi. Quindi abbiamo detto favij, i pigiamini e poi?

**Amadia:** Gli Avengers.

**Federica:** diamo un nome a questo gruppo.

**Amadia:** Idoli da seguire, personaggi di ispirazione.

**Federica:** poi prossimo gruppo.

**Amadia:** poi c'è quello del collegamento tra il menu con le faccine e il Mc menù del McDonald's, che sarebbe proprio la rappresentazione del concetto.

**Federica:** Quindi lo facciamo “esempi concreti Già esistenti?”

**Amadia:** E vabbè dinosauri poi è l'unico ed è “tecniche di persuasione”.

**Federica:** che poi in realtà, tecniche di persuasione è proprio quello che stiamo studiando oggi. Seleziona due fra questi gruppi che sono, secondo te, più simili fra loro e quali invece quelli diversi per quanto riguarda l'importanza rispetto all'argomento della tesi.

**Amadia:** Sì, penso siano questi due diversi, però comunque si collegano tra di loro, cioè per esempio nel Mc menù, comunque, ci sono personaggi come Luca della Disney, che sempre può essere visto come un idolo da seguire da parte dei bambini e quindi poi viene messo apposta sul menu.

**Federica:** Quindi no, ripetimi quali messi insieme e qual è diverso?

**Amadia:** Questi sono quelli che stanno insieme però allo stesso tempo il personaggio di Luca sul Mc menù di cui ho parlato, cioè i personaggi che escono da dentro il menu del McDonald's possono essere sempre associati anche a quest'altro gruppo, cioè come idoli da seguire. Perciò vengono poi posti sul menu

**Federica:** OK quindi questo invece è l'unico diverso, sarebbe il gruppo dei dinosauri

**Amadia:** sì perché è relativo alla forma, al colore, quindi non è assimilabile agli altri.

**Federica:** Adesso scegliami delle variabili, nel senso degli elementi o significati tramite cui crei una classifica di importanza delle pile create che rappresentano le cose più importanti per la tesi.

**Amadia:** Eh in base alla mia esperienza, penso la tecnica di persuasione sia la più importante, cioè tutto parte da lì, devi romanzare, diciamo quello che i bambini vogliono sentirsi dire, devi

influenzarli in qualche modo, poi da qui si collegano ovviamente anche le altre cose, però penso che sia più importante i personaggi di ispirazione E poi dopo gli esempi concreti.

**Federica:** Adesso, fra tutte le immagini che mi hai portato, qual è quella che secondo te è la più importante e invece quella che è meno importante e perché?

**Amadia:** Allora forse la più importante è quella del Mc Menù perché riassume proprio il tutto, cioè nel senso, cioè c'è sia il personaggio da seguire o in questo caso ci sono i Personaggini d'animazione che escono oppure ci sono i disegni vari sul menu, la casetta fatta apposta per mettere dentro il cibo. Invece la meno importante penso siano i personaggi, alla fine gli idoli da seguire, diciamo.

**Federica:** Non come gruppo, però, proprio fra quelle del gruppo meno importante quello che secondo te funziona meno, considerando che stiamo parlando di personaggi Cartoon

**Amadia:** Allora Favij.

**Federica:** Ok. Ora pensa invece ad un'immagine che descriva l'opposto del nostro obiettivo. Cioè cosa potrebbe invece far fallire questa nostra strategia? Cos'è che tu ti immagini sul menu che magari un bambino vede e non funziona, cioè anzi uno lo scarta?

**Amadia:** Ehm, un menù bianco senza colori, tutte scritte, magari la scritta non è nemmeno di particolare carattere, semplice, non attira l'attenzione dei bambini, cioè se tu vai in un ristorante, l'adulto ovviamente leggerà questo menu, perché dice "Fammi vedere che cosa mi devo andare a mangiare" Però il bambino si fida del genitore, quindi dice, "Fai tu per me" o menù bimbi direttamente, oppure non è che si mette là a dire "Oh, come è bello questo menu? Fammi vedere che cosa devo mangiare."

**Federica:** Anche perché se non sanno leggere... ora collegami le immagini che hai portato ai 5 sensi.

**Amadia:** allora, colore i pigiamini subito attirano l'attenzione. l'odore il menu Mc menù perché il McDonald ha sempre un odore particolare che riesce ad attrarre non so per quale motivo. A me non piace, è un po' strano, sa un po' di fritto, però riesce sempre ad attrarre le persone, è come se fosse una droga. La forma, vabbè, i dinosauri, perché proprio hanno la forma del dinosauro. E che altro era? Suono gli Avengers oppure favij, comunque, cioè quelle sono collegati al suono dei poteri diciamo e al suono dei videogiochi e il gusto penso sempre McDonald: esperienza sia olfattiva che poi... C'è il cibo.

**Federica:** Adesso riassumi la tua risposta, considerando queste cose, rispondi alla mia domanda: se tu dovessi essere quella che si sta chiedendo se sono efficaci i personaggi, riassumi tutti i concetti spiegandomi quindi sì o no?

**Amadia:** Sì, sì, sono efficaci personaggi, sono efficaci sempre in base ovviamente all'esperienza. Ho visto i bambini che sono più portati a scegliere determinati tipi di cibo, piuttosto che altri che

sia buona la scelta o cattiva, nel senso che possono scegliere l'insalata, come scegliere, ovviamente l'hamburger con le patatine, roba che fa più male diciamo sempre perché condizionati dal disegno oppure dal personaggio, oppure dal non so da un colore particolare, da una scrittura specifica.

**Federica:** Però tu nel corso dell'intervista mi hai detto varie cose, mi hai detto ad esempio i bambini non sanno ancora leggere o scrivere, però altri sì. Oppure c'è una nuova generazione di bambini diversa da noi. Poi fasce d'età. Quindi, in base a queste cose qua?

**Amadia:** OK, in base alla fascia di età per i bambini che non sanno leggere e scrivere, ovviamente salta subito all'occhio il disegno, che rappresenta appunto cosa vogliono mangiare oppure un determinato colore. Loro magari associano anche il colore: se vedono un colore verde vedono più una cosa che non è buona, piuttosto ad un colore chiaro come il rosa oppure anche il rosso: sono colori, diciamo che hanno più importanza rispetto ad altri colori, cioè in base associato anche che ne so il Verde al disgusto. Sì, perché da fin dalle elementari, comunque, si impara a distinguere, diciamo vengono associati dei colori all'esperienza, anche olfattiva, oppure esperienze sensoriali.

**Federica:** E invece, per quanto riguarda l'utilizzo di questi personaggi per questa fascia d'età di più piccoli oppure fascia d'età di più grandi?

**Amadia:** Quindi ci deve essere una divisione secondo me, cioè la divisione deve essere per i più piccoli mettere magari personaggi appunto, cartoni animati che comunque loro conoscono perché vedono determinati film oppure determinati cartoni che “non sono”, che “non possono vedere”, “non ci possono arrivare” devono conoscere. E la stessa cosa per i più grandi, comunque devono essere personaggi conosciuti che loro sanno che sono influenze e quindi che loro possono seguire questa influenza.

**Federica:** Però, se io ti sto chiedendo sul personaggio generico, tu adesso mi hai detto “conosciuti”, quindi secondo te?

**Amadia:** Potrebbe capitare che un personaggio meno conosciuto può attirare meno l'attenzione.

**Federica:** come se non ci fosse?

**Amadia:** No, loro se ne accorgono, cioè vedono che c'è il Personaggino però non ci danno molto, cioè non danno molto peso. Perché preferiscono sempre personaggi che per loro attirano l'attenzione, cioè loro dicono, “io conosco questo personaggio, fare queste cose è forte. Io devo seguire questo personaggio per fare queste cose.”

**Federica:** Ultima domanda prima di finire questa intervista. ti chiedo, dopo che tutto quello che hai pensato e che hai detto, se te lo chiedo di nuovo, ti viene in mente qualche immagine che avresti potuto usare per esprimere un concetto a cui non hai pensato, oppure un concetto che secondo te è importante, per cui però non hai trovato un'immagine?

**Amadia:** forse sì, ma non perché non abbia trovato l'immagine ma perché non mi è saltato subito. non ci ho pensato subito, probabilmente, come ho detto, la differenza di età, la di fasce d'età, la differenza di genere, cioè magari una femminuccia, potrebbe essere più attratta da una principessa oppure da un determinato personaggio piuttosto che magari da un Avengers oppure viceversa. Il maschio non è che se vede sul menu la principessa poi dice "Oh, devo diventare una principessa." Però questo, sempre al giorno d'oggi è anche cambiato. infatti, ci sono comunque maschietti che se vedono la Principessa Sono contenti oppure femminucce che si vedono gli Avengers e dicono "oh, che bello. Voglio diventare come un Avengers anch'io un supereroe." Ci sono anche i personaggi femminili negli Avengers, quindi può darsi pure che loro associno quello. Come anche i principi, magari al posto delle principesse.

**Federica:** Va bene, grazie Amadia. Dimmi, sei consapevole e dai il tuo consenso a questa intervista?

**Amadia:** Ah sì, ho dato il mio consenso.

**Federica:** Oggi che giorno è?

**Amadia:** 27 aprile.

**Federica:** Grazie mille.

**Amadia:** Di niente.

#### TRANSLATION

Federica: Hello everyone, I'm Federica Petrella, a marketing student at Luiss Guido Carli and I'm conducting a research project for my thesis focused on the use of "cartoonized" spokescharacters on restaurant menus as a nudge to promote more healthy among children. Today I'm here with Amadia del Pennino, a student of modern philology at Federico II with many years of experience in children's entertainment. Today we begin the interview for which the participant received a series of instructions and guidelines to follow on the topic of my research and I asked her to take photographs or collect images that could respond to my need to understand the effectiveness of intervention, through the expression of his thoughts and opinions. The figure represents the hypothetical modified menu with a generic superhero that I presented to the participants a few days before the interview, in order to have a clear idea of what they should have commented. So how many pictures did you bring me?

Amadia: It should be 6.

Federica: Okay. Tell me, describe me in a few words what is in each image and the reason why you brought them.

Amadia: So I brought 6 images precisely because you asked me if it was important to introduce elements for children into menus, etc., all these things here and I first of all chose an image that really represents a menu. Based on my experience, summer camp, animation etc. I realized that



yes, it's true, children often need a motivation or something close, I don't know. In this case it says "salad" on the menu and there is a picture of the salad next to it. This can be important both because, I don't know, the laughing salad face can be useful for children, and because maybe there are also children who don't know how to read or write yet and therefore it is important to perhaps associate the word written on the menu also an image, so that the child sees the salad or sees the sandwich and says "yes, I want the sandwich, I want the chips, I want the salad" to the parents, so let's say that this in general was to make people understand that yes, for me it is important. Then there are other factors that must be taken into consideration, namely that today's children are no longer those of our generation. We were a little more associated with the fact of the images, like, I don't know, I see the princess on the menu so I say "oh this princess eat this sandwich or eat this type of dish, so it means that to be a princess I have to eat the same dish" or the same thing children did for superheroes. This thing can still work for some children, but it still depends on the age groups. This is because with the introduction of social media and especially Youtube, as we know, with the introduction of famous youtubers, children tend to follow them more as mentors, let's say, as a cue, rather than cartoons, which for them are already fictitious. For them, seeing the cartoon up to perhaps the age of 6 can still be associated with something truthful, but then soon after they understand that it is no longer reality, but fiction. Instead, seeing a person that is basically a boy like them, they aspire to become a youtuber or a fashion blogger, and they say "if he does this, it means that in order to become like them, I have to do this too". that's why I brought, oh well, the emblem, the only youtuber I know personally which is Favij. He makes videos, it seems to me, about videogames and he is very followed by groups that really range from younger to older ages and he manages to influence so much. Not only because he, in fact, brings them into this world of video games, and therefore all children interested in video games follow this thing, but also because they see him, precisely as an emblem, as a person to follow, a model to imitate. Ah then the fact of the different age groups, i.e. children up to 6 years old, still manage to be subjected, let's say to those who are cartoons and that's why I brought the PJMASK, the famous Pajamas and that I met at the summer camp thanks to the children and they came near me, they just said "this is the pajamas shirt" or "this is the sandwich that pajamas eat Eh?" And so I said oh well let's put it because I have always known them through children. Then oh well, a little older they follow the Avengers, because they see the inspiration if they start reading, for example, comics and therefore already another inspiration that they can use, or the films that are very popular, that is, it's all based I think on what's going on at the moment.

Federica: In your opinion, this difference may coincide with the fact that you said earlier, reality/fiction, that maybe the cartoons are fake and...

Amadia: Yes, and the people are real, but instead they manage to identify more, perhaps in a real person they see rather than in the character, something that younger children can do. Instead, the older ones already understand the difference, that is, they understand that they are not a cartoon. Another thing that serves to corroborate the thesis, let's say, is what McDonald's does, for example, which often uses the McMenù or the Happy Meal which puts characters of the moment, as for example in this case there is Luca from the Disney animated film, which precisely puts the characters inside as a surprise, but still serves to make people understand, i.e. the child sees the menu with Luca on it and says "Oh, I saw Luca's film, the Luca's thing, I want to have a happy meal with Luca because the character comes out from within me". The last thing instead is more of a personal experience, that is, I chose it more from personal experience, that is the pasta in the shape of a dinosaur. Because children, especially the younger ones, when they don't want to eat something, you can get them to eat it based on what you present to them, in this case the pasta, maybe there are some children who say no, I don't want pasta in a certain way, you bring him dinosaurs, you say look, this is dinosaur pasta, you need to become a very famous archaeologist, if you eat this dinosaur, you will know that this dinosaur did these specific things or did other specific things

Federica: So it's as if you could, through the form of food, romance..

Amadia: Exactly. here is the point based on my experience, fictionalizing things for children, that is, the more children see an interesting thing, the more they are driven to follow that particular thing, for example there was a child at summer camp who didn't want to eat pasta with vegetables. He didn't want to and he didn't want to. One day there was the set menu and one dish was pasta with courgettes. This child had never eaten courgettes as soon as he saw them at home, he felt like turning them over and so on. Anyway, I told the cook to puree the zucchini. Here comes this green-colored pasta, with this green sauce, and I start telling the kids eat, this is Hulk pasta. One day I was saying about the Hulk, or one day I was saying these about dinosaurs. I always associated with the fact of dinosaurs, because there was a boy who was very obsessed with summer camp with dinosaurs. And so I start saying look, this is pasta, it's made with dinosaur scales, all little stories to convince him and in the end this child ate pasta with courgettes. When his mother came to get him she said "but what, he has never eaten zucchini in her life how did you do? How did you manage to convince him?" we told the little story and he said I have to use these techniques at home too.

Federica: Patience. Now think about all that. To all the preparation you've done these days to arrive at these concepts. Is there some concept that you would have liked to say, to express, but for which you haven't found any images that would help you to represent it?

Amadia: Um, I don't think so. I think it was all a bit summary, that is, all the images I chose were sufficient, let's say to express what was my thought on the question I was asked and on the thought I had to develop.

Federica: Now think of all the images you brought, sort them according to, I don't know, maybe how connected they are, or if they represent the same or similar concept, etc... a meaning that you choose, put them together and let's make groups

Amadia: OK oh well then practically Favij, the pajamas and the Avengers are always connected to each other for a question relating to the character that is taken into consideration. the menu with the smileys is connected to the McMenù...

Federica: let's remember for a moment how you name groups. So we said favij, pajamas and then what?

Amadia: The Avengers.

Federica: let's give this group a name.

Amadia: Idols to follow, inspirational characters.

Federica: then next group.

Amadia: then there is that of the connection between the menu with the smileys and the McDonald's Mc menu, which would be the representation of the concept.

Federica: So let's do it "concrete examples already exist?"

Amadia: Oh well dinosaurs then it's the only one and it's "techniques of persuasion".

Federica: that in reality, persuasion techniques are exactly what we are studying today. Select two of these groups that are, in your opinion, more similar to each other and which ones are different in terms of importance with respect to the topic of the thesis.

Amadia: Yes, I think these two are different, but in any case they are connected to each other, that is, for example in the Mc menu, however, there are characters like Luca from Disney, who can always be seen as an idol to be followed by children and so then it's put on purpose on the menu.

Federica: So no, tell me again which ones put together and which one is different?

Amadia: These are the ones who stay together but at the same time the character of Luca on the Mc menu I mentioned, i.e. the little characters who come out from inside the McDonald's menu can also always be associated with this other group, i.e. as idols from follow. Therefore they are then placed on the menu

Federica: OK so this one is the only one that's different, it would be the group of dinosaurs

Amadia: yes, because it is relative to the shape, to the colour, therefore it cannot be assimilated to the others.

Federica: Now choose me some variables, in the sense of the elements or meanings through which you create a ranking of importance of the stacks created that represent the most important things for the thesis.

Amadia: Eh based on my experience, I think the persuasion technique is the most important, that is, everything starts from there, you have to fictionalize, let's say what the children want to hear, you have to influence them in some way, then obviously they also connect from here the other things, but I think it's more important the inspirational characters and then after the concrete examples.

Federica: Now, out of all the images you brought me, which is the one that you think is the most important and the one that is less important and why?

Amadia: Then perhaps the most important is that of the McMenù because it sums up everything, that is, in the sense, that is, there is either the little character to follow or in this case there are the animated characters that come out or there are various little drawings on the menu, the house made especially for putting food inside. Instead the least important I think are the characters, in the end the idols to follow, let's say.

Federica: Not as a group, however, precisely among those of the less important group the one that according to you works less, considering that we are talking about cartoon characters

Amadia: Then Favij.

Federica: Okay. Now think instead of an image that describes the opposite of our goal. In other words, what could make this strategy of ours fail? What is it that you imagine on the menu that maybe a child sees and doesn't work, that is, rather one discards it?

Amadia: Um, a white menu with no colours, all writing, maybe the writing isn't even of a particular character, simple, it doesn't attract the attention of children, that is, if you go to a restaurant, the adult will obviously read this menu, because says "Show me what I have to go eat" But the child trusts the parent, so he says, "You make it for me" or the children's menu directly, or he doesn't just stand there saying "Oh, how beautiful this is menu? Show me what I have to eat."

Federica: Also because if they can't read... now connect me the images you brought to your 5 senses.

Amadia: then, color pajamas immediately attract attention. the smell the menu Mc menu because McDonald's always has a particular smell that manages to attract I don't know why. I don't like it, it's a bit strange, it tastes a bit fried, but it always manages to attract people, it's like it's a drug. The shape, oh well, the dinosaurs, because they really have the shape of the dinosaur. And what else was it? I play the Avengers or favij, anyway, that is, those are connected to the sound of

powers let's say and to the sound of video games and I always think McDonald's taste: both an olfactory experience and then... There's the food.

Federica: Now summarize your answer, considering these things, answer my question: if you were the one who is wondering if the characters are effective, summarize all the concepts and explain to me yes or no?

Amadia: Yes, yes, they are effective characters, they are always effective obviously based on experience. I have seen children who are more inclined to choose certain types of food, rather than others, whether the choice is good or bad, in the sense that they can choose salads, how to choose, of course, hamburgers and fries, stuff that makes them more bad we always say because conditioned by the drawing or by the character, or by the I don't know by a particular color, by a specific writing.

Federica: But during the interview you told me various things, for example you told me that children still don't know how to read or write, but others do. Or there is a new generation of children who are different from us. Then age groups. So, based on these things here?

Amadia: OK, depending on the age group for children who cannot read and write, obviously the little drawing immediately catches the eye, which represents precisely what they want to eat or a certain colour. Perhaps they also associate color: if they see a green color they see more of something that is not good, rather than a light color like pink or even red: they are colours, let's say they have more importance than other colours, that is, on the basis also associated with I don't know Green with disgust. Yes, because since elementary school, however, one learns to distinguish, let's say colors are associated with experience, even olfactory, or sensory experiences.

Federica: And instead, what about the use of these characters for this younger age group or the older age group?

Amadia: So there must be a division in my opinion, that is, the division must be for the little ones to perhaps include characters, cartoons that they know anyway because they see certain films or certain cartoons that they "are not", that they "can't see" , "they can't get there" they must know. And the same thing for the older ones, however they have to be known characters that they know are influences and therefore that they can follow this influence.

Federica: However, if I'm asking you about the generic character, you've now told me "known", so in your opinion?

Amadia: It could happen that a less known character may attract less attention.

Federica: as if it weren't there?

Amadia: No, they notice it, that is, they see that the little character is there, but they don't give it much, that is, they don't give much weight. Because they always prefer characters that are

attention-grabbing for them, which they say, “I know this character, doing these things is cool. I have to follow this character to do these things.”

Federica: Last question before finishing this interview. I ask you, after all that you have thought and said, if I ask you again, can you think of some image that you could have used to express a concept you have not thought about, or a concept that you think is important, but you didn't find an image for it? Amadia: maybe yes, but not because I didn't find the image but because it didn't jump right away. I didn't think about it right away, probably, as I said, the age difference, the age range, the gender difference, i.e. maybe a girl could be more attracted by a princess or by a specific character rather than perhaps by an Avengers or vice versa. The male is not that if he sees the princess on the menu then he says “Oh, I have to become a princess.” But this has always changed nowadays. In fact, there are still boys who are happy if they see the Princess or girls who see the Avengers and say “oh, how nice. I want to become like an Avengers superhero too.” There are also female characters in the Avengers, so maybe they associate with that as well. As well as the princes, perhaps instead of the princesses.

Federica: All right, thanks Amadia. Tell me, are you aware and do you give your consent to this interview?

Amadia: Ah yes, I gave my consent.

Federica: What day is it today?

Amadia: 27 April.

Federica: Thank you very much.

Amadia: You're welcome.

## **ROBERTA**

**Federica:** Buongiorno, sono Federica Petrella, studentessa di marketing alla Luiss Guido Carli e sto conducendo un progetto di ricerca per la mia tesi incentrata sull'utilizzo degli spokescharacters o portavoce cartoonizzati sui menù dei ristoranti come nudge per promuovere scelte alimentari più salutari tra i bambini. Oggi sono qui con Roberta Girardi, laureata in scienze motorie, con esperienza ormai pluriennale con i bambini come maestra alle elementari. Ciao Roberta.

**Roberta:** Ciao Federica, buongiorno

**Federica:** iniziamo, come prima cosa fammi vedere le tue immagini. Mentre mi fai vedere le immagini, spiegami brevemente, fammi capire cosa stiamo vedendo e perché le hai scelte.

**Roberta:** Allora le immagini che ho deciso di portarti derivano dalla mia esperienza a scuola perché sono una tutor sportiva nella scuola elementare e appunto, ho affrontato il tema dell'alimentazione corretta. A scuola abbiamo partecipato ad un contest in cui i bambini si sono

divertiti a scrivere il testo di una canzone sulle buone abitudini alimentari. Per aiutarli e incentivarli, appunto all'argomentazione ho mostrato loro un PowerPoint sulla tematica e poi diverse immagini tra cui c'è l'immagine di braccio di ferro che si dimostra forte e robusto con una lattina di spinaci e un'immagine con le tartarughe Ninja che mangiano la pizza. Ho chiesto ai bambini secondo loro cosa farebbe bene mangiare e alcuni bambini mi hanno indicato l'immagine con braccio di ferro e altri quella con le tartarughe Ninja e ho chiesto loro perché. Quelli che mi hanno indicato braccio di ferro mi hanno detto che volevano essere forti e robusti come lui, mentre altri che mi hanno indicato le tartarughe Ninja, mi dicevano che in realtà è più buona la pizza rispetto agli spinaci. Allora ho fatto io una domanda a loro, ovvero se al posto degli spinaci ci fosse stata l'immagine di braccio di ferro loro cosa avrebbero scelto? E con mia sorpresa mi hanno detto che comunque braccio di ferro perché mangiando la pizza lo vedevano comunque forte e robusto, quindi secondo il mio punto di vista non è tanto importante inserire immagini di cibo salutare, ma bisognerebbe puntare di più sui personaggi che lo ripropongono. Quindi braccio di ferro forte e robusto che emana energia, potrebbe essere un ottimo personaggio che spronerebbe a Mangiare più salutare.

**Federica:** quante fotografie mi hai portato e perché?

**Roberta:** allora ti ho portato 7 immagini, ogni immagine ha un proprio significato. ti ho portato braccio di ferro con la lattina di spinaci, perché comunque braccio di ferro può essere proprio per antonomasia il personaggio della forza e quindi i bambini lo potrebbero associare appunto al mangiare regolare e diventare forti con la lattina di spinaci. Poi ti ho portato un'immagine di bambini che fanno merenda insieme, perché comunque anche fare merenda significa condividere e in questa immagine ci sono bambini proprio che sorridono perché il mangiare è anche condivisione; quindi, comunque mettere un'immagine dove c'è la "felicità", bambini che sorridono mangiando è un ottimo proposito per introdurre cibo salutare. Poi un'altra immagine che ti ho portato è un bambino con delle mele sul braccio che stanno a indicare appunto anche la forza, in questo caso, perché è giusto che comunque i bambini vedano loro simili mangiando cose salutari e quindi si identificano in un'immagine del genere. Poi una delle mie preferite c'è Sportacus, un personaggio di una serie TV, di un cartone, diciamo così, in cui lui è un supereroe molto agile e tende sempre ad aiutare gli altri e lo fa innanzitutto con l'attività e con il mangiare salutare; infatti, in questa foto c'è lui che mangia un frutto e incita gli altri nel farlo e vedendo lui che comunque è un supereroe che mangia in modo salutare, in questo caso la frutta può incitare comunque i bambini ad assumere atteggiamenti simili. Poi un'altra immagine, ci sono le tartarughe Ninja, quindi comunque un altro cartone animato, che mangiano tutti insieme la pizza. qui non è rappresentata la forza oppure il mangiare salutare, però comunque è rappresentata la condivisione, Come già detto prima, è rappresentato lo stare bene e quindi anche "uno sfizio"

ogni tanto ci può stare, non solo il mangiare salutare. Poi un'altra immagine, c'è un disco salutare dove sono rappresentati le varie abitudini, ad esempio, bere tanta acqua, mangiare frutta e verdura, mangiare regolarmente, mangiare vario che è molto importante cambiare le cose nel menu diciamo E godere con tutti i sensi significa che comunque bisogna assaporare tutto, non solo con il gusto, ma anche una cosa bella, deve essere per essere mangiata.

**Federica:** Quindi intendi esteticamente da vedere?

**Roberta:** Esteticamente, sì. E poi un'ultima immagine è un orologio dove appunto sta ad indicare ogni ora il pasto che deve essere fatto, sempre collegato all'immagine di una supereroina che incita i bambini a mangiare regolarmente ad ogni ora, perché è giusto che comunque i bambini vengono indirizzati che alle 8 si fa colazione, alle 12:00 si fa lo spuntino, poi si fa il pranzo, che i pasti principali in una giornata devono essere 5. Il pranzo, poi di nuovo uno spuntino e poi la cena.

**Federica:** E come mi attribuisce tutto questo alla risposta alla domanda della tesi, cioè se è efficace utilizzare dei cartoni animati o personaggi animati per convincere i bambini? proprio cioè come posso usare queste immagini secondo te? Come mai, per esempio in questa immagine c'è stavolta una supereroina? Invece prima hai portato un supereroe?

**Roberta:** E' comunque anche giusto fare una differenza, perché i bambini comunque guardano, come ho detto prima i loro simili, quindi per le femmine vedono una supereroina anziché un supereroe, mentre per i maschi un supereroe anziché di una supereroina, e quindi è giusto anche mettere un personaggio femminile per le femmine e maschile per i maschi.

**Federica:** Ok, allora Andiamo avanti. Step 2: ci sono delle immagini, dei concetti che tu mi avresti voluto dire, per cui però non sei riuscita a trovare un'immagine rappresentativa?

**Roberta:** In realtà sì, perché si può introdurre l'alimentazione anche come gioco, quindi magari avrei voluto trovare un'immagine di un gioco dove si può scegliere anche il cibo sul menù, anche se ci sono, come devo dire, Sul menu sono rappresentate diversi alimenti, magari c'è una freccia a sorteggio che ti potrebbe indicare l'alimento giusto per te di quella giornata, ovviamente sempre scegliendo in base all'alimentazione corretta, quindi, non è che sul menù ci devono essere patatine fritte e insalata ma solo cose buone.

**Federica:** quindi magari il gioco metterlo solamente in quella parte del menù dove ci sono le cose salutari? perché comunque noi stiamo parlando di un menù misto, nel senso che c'è un menu completo fatto di cose salutari e un menu completo fatto solo di cose non buone o comunque considerate junk food; quindi, magari il gioco secondo te può essere utile per...

**Roberta:** Sì, per i bambini sì, perché comunque è importante allegare gioco sempre con quello che si deve fare perché l'ho proprio riscontrato che comunque a scuola facciamo merenda e in molti casi, non io personalmente, perché comunque ci sto più poco tempo rispetto alle altre



maestre, però le maestre inventano giochi per far mangiare tipo anche lo yogurt, molti giorni portano le mandorle e quindi fanno dei giochi per far mangiare più salutare i bambini per abituarli proprio.

**Federica:** Ok, adesso sempre sulle immagini che mi hai portato ordinale, mettile insieme per qualche significato, per qualche motivo particolare e mi crei dei gruppi che secondo te, per esempio, sono coerenti fra loro, sono fatti di cose che rappresentano più o meno lo stesso concetto, ecc e mi dai un titolo per questi gruppi?

**Roberta:** Ok. Allora insieme potrei mettere braccio di ferro con il Supereroe Sportacus. E quest'altra supereroina femmina per il concetto già ci siamo dette prima e qui te lo potrei, te lo potrei chiamare...

**Federica:** Il concetto che tu mi avevi spiegato che collegava tutti i supereroi fra loro, perché sono importanti per i bambini?

**Roberta:** Perché, comunque, loro vogliono assomigliare ai supereroi.

**Federica:** Emulazione?

**Roberta:** Sì. Poi magari un altro, potrei mettere insieme questi bambini che fanno merenda insieme quindi per la condivisione, le tartarughe Ninja che comunque mangiano la pizza sempre tutte insieme, quindi sempre condivisione. quindi questo dà il concetto principale, la condivisione.

**Federica:** Ok. E poi?

**Roberta:** poi c'è il disco, che indica tutte le attività che bisogna fare e il bambino con forte con le mele sul braccio, te lo potrei anche collegare... Ok allora il bambino in realtà lo potrei mettere insieme anche ai supereroi, sempre come emulazione per lo stesso discorso che i bambini si vogliono identificare. Quindi, vedendo anche un simile, quindi un bambino che mangia correttamente riescono a...

**Federica:** si potrebbe interpretare come ad esempio, il bambino diventa eroe lui stesso, cioè perché nella tua immagine è come se fosse braccio di ferro però è proprio un bambino.

**Roberta:** Sì, anche, sta proprio Emulando l'azione di braccio di ferro, quindi sì, per questo va messo proprio con i supereroi. Poi rimane il disco, si può attribuire alle corrette abitudini alimentari, appunto perché il disco, vedi, comprende il bere acqua, mangiare frutta e verdura, mangiare regolarmente e mangiare vario, appunto, combina sempre diversi alimenti, perché ogni alimento comunque ha il suo perché.

**Federica:** questo qui potrebbe essere collegato al concetto di gioco che mi hai detto?

**Roberta:** Sì, anche. Il bambino potrebbe anche divertirsi, magari aggiungendo appunto un orologio, trovandosi in che momento della giornata e sceglie cosa mangiare grazie al disco. Quindi si può essere anche nel gioco.

**Federica:** Poi selezionami tra Le pile che abbiamo creato quelle che sono più simili fra loro tra emulazione condivisione e corretta alimentazione. Se riesci a raggrupparmi due pile insieme oppure se sono tutte diverse per te per quanto riguarda l'importanza con l'argomento. tra i tre gruppi che mi hai creato, ci sono due o tutti e tre insieme che sono simili fra loro, oppure uno è diverso?

**Roberta:** Ehm, no. Secondo me sono comunque tre strategie diverse perché ognuna ha il suo motivo, ad esempio appunto, l'emulazione con i supereroi la posso pure con collegare alla condivisione, ma non più di tanto, quindi a sé stanti diciamo.

**Federica:** poi mettimi in ordine di importanza questi tre gruppi di questi tre concetti, fammi proprio una classifica di quelli da più importante al meno importante secondo te in base a quale variabile o motivazione. Cioè, secondo te, ai fini dell'efficacia dell'utilizzo quale di questi tre concetti metteresti al primo posto?

**Roberta:** Ah OK, secondo me l'emulazione come primo perché appunto, sempre per il solito discorso dei supereroi che i bambini tendono sempre a guardare. I supereroi anche come cartoni animati, perché quanti bambini guardano i supereroi, i cartoni in generale.

**Federica:** Ok invece, tra le altre due, la condivisione, corretta alimentazione e gioco, per dire.

**Roberta:** Il gioco come secondo, perché appunto i bambini da subito cercano sempre di giocare e di divertirsi. Cioè fanno di tutto un gioco i bambini, quindi inserire il gioco nella corretta alimentazione secondo me è una strategia molto vincente. E l'ultima, la condivisione.

**Federica:** Adesso scegliami tra tutte le 7 immagini che hai portato quella che secondo te è la più rappresentativa e quella meno rappresentativa sempre pensando all'efficacia

**Roberta:** Ok, allora mettendo come concetto più importante l'emulazione, quindi come prima ti metterei Sportacus, quindi il supereroe. Ah, poi se ti dovessi fare un ordine ti metterei comunque il gioco. E poi come ultimo..

**Federica:** No, solo la più importante, e mi hai detto sportacus, e la meno importante.

**Roberta:** Meno importante questa qui l'identificarsi.

**Federica:** No descrivimi l'immagine, che immagine è?

**Roberta:** l'immagine del bambino.

**Federica:** Quindi secondo te, mettendo Sportacus funzionerebbe di più rispetto a mettere quell'immagine del bambino?

**Roberta:** si

**Federica:** Quindi mi stai dicendo in generale che se io sto studiando l'efficacia di un personaggio generico e non di un personaggio famoso, non funziona?

**Roberta:** No, secondo me no. Cioè nel senso funziona di più un personaggio conosciuto rispetto a uno comune.

**Federica:** E quindi tu mettendo in mezzo questa cosa, mi puoi introdurre un altro concetto che potrebbe essere utile per me?

**Roberta:** Sì, infatti sì, perché comunque mettendo personaggi famosi può funzionare di più rispetto a uno che non è conosciuto. in questo caso ti ho messo Sportacus si può anche mettere un supereroe per ogni alimento, magari inventando anche magari per, non so, la forza ci vuole un supereroe proprio adatto per la forza; per l'energia un altro supereroe che è più energico.

**Federica:** Eh questo vabbè cioè mi serve come concetto però sempre che un supereroe famoso oppure secondo te posso inventarne uno?

**Roberta:** No, anche inventato, però comunque un supereroe perché è il concetto che funziona di più. Comunque è un supereroe che ha super poteri, anche se non è conosciuto. Però comunque tu lo descrivi, lo disegni perché comunque è un'immagine forte, anche se non è conosciuto per me può funzionare.

**Federica:** Ok, quindi non deve essere per forza famoso, no?

**Roberta:** Esatto.

**Federica:** adesso immagina una situazione sul menu che poi che descrive l'opposto dell'efficacia, cioè che proprio se un bambino lo vede non funziona, non viene attirato a scegliere quel cibo, cioè come ti immagini il menu?

**Roberta:** Menu anti-bambino? A livello di immagine immaginerei tipo non so l'insalata oppure i cavolini di Bruxelles che i bambini non è che ne vanno pazzi però ritratti in modo brutti, molto più reali che fantasiosi. Troppo realistici.

**Federica:** Quindi, se sono realistici, funziona o no?

**Roberta:** No, non funziona. Ci vuole più immaginazione per farli funzionare.

**Federica:** E l'immaginazione, come si, come si rappresenta?

**Roberta:** Ad esempio, sui cavolini di Bruxelles, metterci una faccina sorridente.

**Federica:** Ok, quindi devono essere cartoni. E invece collegami le immagini che hai portato e quindi i concetti che stanno dietro alle immagini ai 5 sensi.

**Roberta:** Ok. Allora partiamo dal gusto. Ok, il gusto te lo potrei mettere con questa delle tartarughe Ninja, perché mangiano comunque la pizza rispetto a braccio di ferro che mangia gli spinaci.

**Federica:** Ma secondo te se in mezzo alle Tartarughe Ninja ci fosse un'insalata al posto della pizza funzionerebbe lo stesso? I bambini non sarebbero lo stesso attirati? considerando che tu parlavi della condivisione, quindi la condivisione rimarrebbe lo stesso.

**Roberta:** Secondo me probabile, perché comunque c'è la condivisione. Magari non solo l'insalata. Magari metterci insalata e Coca Cola, che comunque tu fai l'insalata che è una cosa salutare. La Coca Cola, che comunque è una bibita che.

**Federica:** Non fa male la cocacola?

**Roberta:** Si fa male la coca-cola, ma se si beve in eccesso

**Federica:** Quindi i bambini possono scegliere quella determinata cosa solo se c'è qualcosa che di non salutare che le attira? perché a me interessa sapere se il personaggio da solo funzionerebbe, quindi anche mettendoci per dire, cavolini di Bruxelles qua in mezzo loro non sono tanto attirati dal cibo in se ma dal personaggio.

**Roberta:** sì, lo sceglierebbero lo stesso.

**Federica:** Poi andiamo avanti, abbiamo detto gusto, poi olfatto?

**Roberta:** Olfatto te lo posso mettere..

**Federica:** Se non c'è non c'è, non fa niente.

**Roberta:** Eh, perché infatti non lo trovo.

**Federica:** Ok tatto.

**Roberta:** tatto te lo potrei mettere con braccio di ferro perché comunque si vede la forza dei muscoli.

**Federica:** Vista

**Roberta:** con la condivisione, quindi, con i bambini che mangiano insieme.

**Federica:** Che altro rappresentano sti bambini oltre al fatto che stanno insieme?

**Roberta:** Sono felici comunque, comunque stanno bene tra di loro, perché oltre a mangiare, condividono il momento insieme.

**Federica:** E un suono. Secondo me potresti tirare fuori una.

**Roberta:** Sportacus, Lazy Town perché comunque lui è il supereroe che nel cartone dove si trova attribuisce anche la musicalità, che è un altro elemento importante per i bambini, come appunto collegandolo sempre al gioco: ci sono molte canzoni anche che possono funzionare, molte filastrocche che possono funzionare per incitare i bambini. Anzi, un'altra cosa si potrebbe aggiungere nel menu vicino a un certo alimento si può mettere uno slogan, una piccola filastrocca che ti può restare in testa perché i bambini memorizzano tanto e quindi può rimanere in testa mangiando non so insalata e un altro alimento che può fare anche rima e quindi uno slogan che può funzionare, quindi musicalità.

**Federica:** Ma secondo te, sempre parlando di musicalità, può funzionare il fatto che, per esempio, Sportacus ricordi effettivamente delle canzoncine che fanno parte di un cartone? magari tu guardi l'immagine però pensi, ti ricordi il suono che vi è collegato.

**Roberta:** Eh, infatti, si è proprio collegato l'immagine alla musica, alle filastrocche, proprio collegato.

**Federica:** Come quando si dice "immagini che puoi sentire"

**Roberta:** esatto, immagini che puoi sentire.

**Federica:** Va bene, tiriamo un po' le somme; quindi, se tu dovessi essere me e dovessi rispondere in modo definitivo alla domanda: secondo te è efficace utilizzare cartoni animati come testimonial sui menù per convincere a mangiare quella determinata cosa salutare?

**Roberta:** Dopo tutto quello che ci siamo dette, dopo tutte le immagini che ti ho mostrato è una cosa molto funzionale. Quindi comunque si potrebbe lavorare molto su questa cosa.

**Federica:** Grazie Roby, sei consapevole e d'accordo con questa intervista, con la condivisione delle tue parole sì o no?

**Roberta:** Assolutamente sì.

**Federica:** Grazie mille.

**Roberta:** Grazie a te.

#### TRANSLATION

Federica: Hello, I'm Federica Petrella, a marketing student at Luiss Guido Carli and I'm conducting a research project for my thesis focused on the use of cartoonized spokescharacters on restaurant menus as a nudge to promote healthier food choices among children . Today I'm here with Roberta Girardi, a graduate in motor sciences, with many years of experience with children as a primary school teacher. Hi Roberta.

Roberta: Hi Federica, good morning

Federica: let's start, first let me see your images. While you show me the images, explain briefly, let me understand what we are seeing and why you chose them.

Roberta: So the images I've decided to bring you derive from my experience at school because I'm a sports tutor in elementary school and I've dealt with the issue of proper nutrition. At school we participated in a contest in which the children had fun writing the lyrics to a song about good eating habits. To help them and encourage them, during the discussion I showed them a PowerPoint on the subject and then several images including an image of arm wrestling who proves to be strong and robust with a can of spinach and an image with turtles Ninjas eating pizza. I asked the children what they thought would be good to eat and some children pointed to the picture with arm wrestling and others to the one with Ninja turtles and I asked them why. Those who pointed out arm wrestling to me told me they wanted to be strong and robust like him, while others who pointed out the Ninja turtles told me that pizza is actually better than spinach. So I asked them a question, or if instead of spinach there had been an image of arm wrestling what would they have chosen? And to my surprise they told me that they still arm wrestled because eating pizza they still saw him as strong and robust, so according to my point of view it is not so important to insert images of healthy food, but we should focus more on the characters who

reproduce it . So strong and robust tug of war that emanates energy, could be an excellent character who would encourage you to eat healthier.

Federica: how many photographs did you bring me and why?

Roberta: so I brought you 7 images, each image has its own meaning. I brought you arm wrestling with a can of spinach, because in any case arm wrestling can be precisely the character of strength par excellence and therefore children could associate him precisely with eating regularly and becoming strong with a can of spinach. Then I brought you an image of children having a snack together, because in any case having a snack also means sharing and in this image there are children who are really smiling because eating is also sharing; therefore, however putting an image where there is "happiness", children smiling while eating is an excellent intention to introduce healthy food. Then another image that I brought you is a child with some apples on his arm which also indicate strength, in this case, because it is right that children, in any case, see their kind by eating healthy things and therefore identify themselves in a picture like that. Then one of my favorites is Sportacus, a character from a TV series, a cartoon, let's say, in which he is a very agile superhero and always tends to help others and he does it above all with activity and healthy eating; in fact, in this photo there is him eating a fruit and inciting others to do so and seeing that he is a superhero who eats in a healthy way, in this case the fruit can still incite children to adopt similar attitudes. Then another image, there are the Ninja turtles, so another cartoon anyway, all eating pizza together. strength or healthy eating are not represented here, but sharing is still represented. As already mentioned before, feeling good is represented and therefore even "a whim" can fit in every now and then, not just eating healthy. Then another image, there is a healthy disc where the various habits are represented, for example, drinking lots of water, eating fruit and vegetables, eating regularly, eating varied which is very important to change things on the menu let's say And enjoy it with everyone the senses means that in any case you have to savor everything, not only with taste, but also a beautiful thing, it must be in order to be eaten.

Federica: So you mean aesthetically to see?

Roberta: Aesthetically, yes. And then a last image is a clock where it precisely indicates the meal that must be eaten every hour, always connected to the image of a superheroine who encourages children to eat regularly at every hour, because it is right that children come remind yourself that at 8 you have breakfast, at 12:00 you have a snack, then you have lunch, that there must be 5 main meals in a day. Lunch, then a snack again and then dinner.

Federica: And how do you attribute all this to the answer to the thesis question, i.e. whether it is effective to use cartoons or animated characters to convince children? that is, how can I use these images in your opinion? Why, for example, is there a superheroine in this image this time? Did you bring a superhero first instead?

Roberta: In any case, it is also right to make a difference, because children in any case look, as I said before, at their peers, therefore for females they see a superhero rather than a superhero, while for males a superhero rather than a superhero, and therefore it is also right to put a female character for females and male for males.

Federica: Ok, then let's go ahead. Step 2: are there any images, concepts that you would have liked to tell me, but for which you were unable to find a representative image?

Roberta: Actually yes, because nutrition can also be introduced as a game, so maybe I would have liked to find an image of a game where you can also choose food on the menu, even if there are, as I must say, on the menu are represent different foods, perhaps there is an arrow drawn that could indicate the right food for you for that day, obviously always choosing based on the correct diet, therefore, it is not that the menu must have fries and salad but only good things.

Federica: so maybe the game should only be placed in that part of the menu where there are healthy things? because in any case we are talking about a mixed menu, in the sense that there is a complete menu made up of healthy things and a complete menu made up only of things that are not good or in any case considered junk food; so, maybe the game in your opinion can be useful for...

Roberta: Yes, yes, for the children, because in any case it is important to always attach the game to what you have to do because I really found that we do have a snack at school anyway and in many cases, not me personally, because in any case I spend less time there compared to the other teachers, however the teachers invent games to make them eat like yoghurt, many days they bring almonds and therefore they play games to make the children eat healthier to really get them used to it.

Federica: Ok, now always on the images you brought me, order them, put them together for some meaning, for some particular reason and you create groups that according to you, for example, are coherent with each other, they are made up of things that more or less represent the same concept, etc and give me a title for these groups?

Roberta: Okay. Then together I could arm wrestle with the Superhero Sportacus. And this other female superhero for the concept we have already talked about before and here I could, I could call you...

Federica: The concept that you explained to me that linked all superheroes to each other, why are they important for children?

Roberta: Because, anyway, they want to look like superheroes.

Federica: Emulation?

Roberta: Yes. Then maybe another one, I could put together these children who have a snack together, therefore for sharing, the Ninja turtles who always eat pizza all together, therefore always sharing. so this gives the main concept, sharing.

Federica: Okay. And then?

Roberta: then there's the disc, which indicates all the activities that need to be done and the boy with a fort with apples on his arm, I could even connect it to you... Ok then, actually, I could also put the boy together with superheroes, again like emulation for the same discourse that children want to identify with. Therefore, seeing also a similar, therefore a child who eats correctly they manage to...

Federica: it could be interpreted as, for example, the child becomes a hero himself, that is because in your image it is as if he were arm wrestling but he is really a child.

Roberta: Yes, also, it's really Emulating the action of arm wrestling, so yes, that's why it really goes with superheroes. Then the disk remains, it can be attributed to correct eating habits, precisely because the disk, you see, includes drinking water, eating fruit and vegetables, eating regularly and eating varied, in fact, it always combines different foods, because each food has its own Why.

Federica: Could this here be connected to the game concept you told me?

Roberta: Yes, too. The child could also have fun, perhaps adding a clock, finding himself at what time of day and choosing what to eat thanks to the disc. So you can be in the game too.

Federica: Then select me from the piles we've created the ones that are most similar to each other between sharing emulation and correct power supply. If you can group me two stacks together or if they are all different to you in terms of importance with the topic. among the three groups you created for me, are there two or all three together that are similar to each other, or is one different?

Roberta: Um, no. In my opinion, however, there are three different strategies because each has its own reason, for example, emulation with superheroes can also be linked to sharing, but not that much, so let's say in their own right.

Federica: then put these three groups of these three concepts in order of importance, give me a ranking of those from most important to least important in your opinion based on which variable or motivation. That is, in your opinion, for the purpose of effective use which of these three concepts would you put in first place?

Roberta: Ah OK, in my opinion emulation as the first because precisely, always for the usual speech of superheroes that children always tend to watch. Superheroes also like cartoons, because how many children watch superheroes, cartoons in general.

Federica: Ok instead, among the other two, sharing, proper nutrition and play, so to speak.



Roberta: Play as a second course, because children always try to play and have fun right from the start. In other words, children make everything a game, so inserting the game into correct nutrition is, in my opinion, a very successful strategy. And the last one, sharing.

Federica: Now choose me among all the 7 images you brought the one that according to you is the most representative and the least representative always thinking about effectiveness

Roberta: Ok, so putting emulation as the most important concept, so as before I would put you Sportacus, then the superhero. Ah, then if I had to place an order for you, I'd still put the game on for you. And then lastly...

Federica: No, only the most important, and you told me sportacus, and the least important.

Roberta: This one is less important than identifying yourself.

Federica: No, describe the image to me, what image is it?

Roberta: the image of the child.

Federica: So in your opinion, putting Sportacus would work better than putting that image of the child?

Roberta: yes

Federica: So you're telling me in general that if I'm studying the effectiveness of a generic character and not a famous one, it doesn't work?

Roberta: No, I don't think so. That is, in the sense that a known character works more than a common one.

Federica: So, putting this thing in the middle, can you introduce me to another concept that could be useful for me?

Roberta: Yes, in fact yes, because in any case putting famous people can work more than one who is not known. in this case I put you Sportacus you can also put a superhero for each food, perhaps even inventing maybe for, I don't know, strength you need a superhero really suitable for strength; for energy another superhero who is more energetic.

Federica: Eh, oh well, that is, I need it as a concept but always that a famous superhero or do you think I can invent one?

Roberta: No, even invented, but still a superhero because it's the concept that works the most. However he is a superhero who has super powers, even if he is not known. But however you describe it, you draw it because it's a strong image anyway, even if it's not known to me it can work.

Federica: Ok, so he doesn't have to be famous, right?

Roberta: Exactly.

Federica: now imagine a situation on the menu which then describes the opposite of effectiveness, ie that just if a child sees it, it doesn't work, he isn't attracted to choosing that food, i.e. how do you imagine the menu?

Roberta: Anti-child menu? In terms of image, I would imagine like I don't know about salad or Brussels sprouts that children aren't crazy about them but portrayed in an ugly way, much more real than imaginative. Too realistic.

Federica: So, if they are realistic, does it work or not?

Roberta: No, it doesn't work. It takes more imagination to make them work.

Federica: And the imagination, how is it, how is it represented?

Roberta: For example, on Brussels sprouts, put a smiley face on it.

Federica: Ok, so they must be cartoons. Instead, connect the images you brought and therefore the concepts behind the images to the 5 senses.

Roberta: Okay. So let's start with the taste. Ok, I could give you the taste with this one of the Ninja turtles, because they still eat pizza compared to arm wrestling who eats spinach.

Federica: But in your opinion if among the Ninja Turtles there was a salad instead of pizza would it work the same? Wouldn't children still be attracted to it? whereas you were talking about sharing, then sharing would remain the same.

Roberta: In my opinion probable, because in any case there is sharing. Maybe not just the salad. Maybe put salad and Coca Cola in it, that anyway you make salad which is a healthy thing. Coca Cola, which in any case is a drink that.

Federica: Isn't coke bad for you?

Roberta: Coca-Cola is bad for you, but if you drink it in excess

Federica: So children can choose that specific thing only if there is something unhealthy that attracts them? because I'm interested in knowing if the character alone would work, so even putting it, say, Brussels sprouts here among them are not so much attracted by the food itself but by the character.

Roberta: yes, they would choose it anyway.

Federica: Then let's go on, did we say taste, then smell?

Roberta: Smell I can put it for you..

Federica: If it's not there it's not there, it doesn't matter.

Roberta: Eh, because in fact I can't find it.

Federica: Ok tact.

Roberta: tact I could put you with arm wrestling because you can still see the strength of the muscles.

Federica: Sight

Roberta: with sharing, therefore, with the children who eat together.

Federica: What else do these children represent besides the fact that they are together?

Roberta: They are happy anyway, however they are happy with each other, because in addition to eating, they share the moment together.

Federica: And a sound. I think you could come up with one.

Roberta: Sportacus, Lazy Town because in any case he is the superhero who in the cartoon where he is found also attributes musicality, which is another important element for children, as always connecting him to the game: there are also many songs that can work, many nursery rhymes that can work to incite children. Indeed, another thing could be added to the menu next to a certain food, you could put a slogan, a little nursery rhyme that can stick in your head because children memorize a lot and therefore it can stick in your head while eating I don't know, salad and another food which can also rhyme and therefore a slogan which can work, therefore musicality.

Federica: But in your opinion, still speaking of musicality, can it work that, for example, Sportacus actually remembers the songs that are part of a cartoon? maybe you look at the image but you think, you remember the sound that is connected to it.

Roberta: Eh, in fact, the image is really connected to the music, to the nursery rhymes, really connected.

Federica: Like when they say "images you can hear"

Roberta: exactly, images you can hear.

Federica: All right, let's sum up a bit; so, if you were me and you had to definitively answer the question: do you think it is effective to use cartoons as testimonials on menus to convince people to eat that particular healthy thing?

Roberta: After everything we've said to each other, after all the images I've shown you, it's a very functional thing. So anyway there could be a lot of work on this thing.

Federica: Thanks Roby, are you aware and in agreement with this interview, with sharing your words yes or no?

Roberta: Absolutely yes.

Federica: Thank you very much.

Roberta: Thank you.

## **MARIATERESA**

**Federica:** Buongiorno a tutti, sono Federica Petrella, studentessa di marketing alla Luiss Guido Carli e sto conducendo un progetto di ricerca per la mia tesi incentrato sull'utilizzo degli spokescharacters o portavoce cartoonizzati sui menù dei ristoranti come nudge per promuovere

scelte alimentari più salutari tra i bambini. Oggi sono qui con Maria Teresa Caliendo, la quale ha ricevuto una serie di istruzioni e di linee guida da seguire sul topic della mia ricerca e le ho chiesto di fare delle fotografie o raccogliere delle immagini che potessero rispondere alla esigenza di comprendere l'efficacia dell'intervento, attraverso l'espressione dei suoi pensieri e opinioni, la figura rappresenta l'ipotetico menù modificato con un supereroe generico che ho presentato ai partecipanti qualche giorno prima delle interviste al fine di avere un'idea chiara di ciò che avrebbero dovuto commentare. Mariateresa è la mamma di Giulia e Luca, di quattro e di due anni. Allora io ho tutti degli step da seguire, partiamo dal primo. Raccontami, descrivimi le immagini che hai portato e qual è la motivazione dietro?

**Mariateresa:** La maggior parte delle immagini che ho scelto riguardano frutta e verdura perché ho spesso sentito parlare altre mamme che demonizzano proprio il ruolo della frutta e della verdura nei bambini. Nel mio caso non è stato così perché i miei figli adorano la frutta in particolare e penso che questo sia dovuto al fatto che abbiamo sempre avuto un approccio al cibo tramite questo tipo di immagini. Quindi questo, insomma, è stata la scelta di questa tipologia, di cioè questa è stata la motivazione per la scelta di queste immagini. Per quanto riguarda le altre immagini, mi sono ispirata ai cartoni che loro di solito guardano, quindi Bing e Masha e orso, perché loro spesso durante i cartoni hanno parlato di questi cibi che loro non hanno mai voluto assaggiare o non gli ho mai preparato. Grazie a questi cartoni hanno scelto di assaggiarli e quindi da quel momento hanno iniziato a mangiarli.

**Federica:** Mi puoi descrivere nello specifico ogni immagine cosa contiene? Quante sono prima di tutto?

**Mariateresa:** 14.

**Federica:** Ok. Andiamo immagine per immagine, prima mi descrivi il contenuto e poi mi spieghi.

**Mariateresa:** Allora la prima immagine riguarda della frutta, tipo EMOTICON. Ogni frutta rappresenta una faccina felice e quindi ho scelto questa immagine, perché mi sembra appunto un'idea felice della frutta e quindi può essere un'idea carina per far assaggiare frutti nuovi ai bambini. Quindi, come ho già detto loro sono felicissimi di mangiare frutta, cioè mangerebbero frutta sempre anche a colazione. Stesso discorso per l'insalata a forma di supereroe e la zuccina, che rappresenta un'altra emoji, insomma, e anche le altre verdure. Sono restii di solito a mangiare tipo i broccoli perché non essendo di stagione tutto l'anno, quando arriva il periodo dei broccoli magari non si ricordavano di averli già mangiati in passato e quindi grazie a questa tipologia di immagini di solito riesco a farglieli mangiare. Gli spiego, magari le caratteristiche di ogni verdura, le vitamine che contengono, perché sono buone perché servono e loro, di conseguenza, le assaggiano e di solito siamo anche portati a dare un nome al piatto, quindi magari associamo alla verdura verde, il piatto di Hulk piuttosto che la pasta di Bing se è con la carota oppure con la

zucca si arancione eccetera. Loro sono contenti di assaggiare. Per quanto riguarda invece il panino, l'ho scelto perché ho i figli, in particolare il più piccolo, pensavo fosse difficile fargli mangiare un panino fuori casa, anche perché di solito a casa gli faccio mangiare dei pasti completi con carboidrati che possono essere la pasta, il secondo, per me è più facile, però quando siamo fuori casa risulta più facile portare un panino. Inizialmente pensavo fosse difficile o che comunque loro fossero restii a mangiarli e invece poi vuoi per il McDonald's, che comunque è portato insomma, per questa cosa, i fast Food in generale. Però niente, insomma, questa immagine sembrava carina, perché era un panino completo.

**Federica:** Anche la zuccina è supereroe?

**Mariateresa:** La zuccina no, è un emoji e un emoji felice. Invece, per quanto riguarda. I teneroni sia di masha e orso che di dei Looney Tunes questo è un tipo di cibo che io non avrei mai comprato per i bambini o che di solito non mangio neanche io. Però loro sono stati attratti da queste immagini e quindi di conseguenza ho dovuto comprarli. Li hanno voluti assaggiare e quindi quando ho capito che c'è questa associazione da parte loro con i cartoni animati o comunque dei personaggi che riconoscono ho capito che funzionando in questo modo ho fatto così anche per gli altri cibi. Ok invece la scelta degli emoticon è dovuta al fatto che i bambini oggi le riconoscono e quindi poteva essere carino creare un menù per i bambini per farlo riconoscere e per farlo leggere anche ai bambini che non sanno ancora leggere. E invece per quanto riguarda i parchi giochi e i playground che ho scelto oppure i kit che a volte danno nei ristoranti, mi è capitato di andare nei ristoranti in cui danno dei kit per far colorare o disegnare i bambini, oppure in alcuni ristoranti dove hanno dei piatti e posate, bicchieri tutti a forma di bambino, quindi di plastica, non di vetro, più colorati con i manici particolari, ti danno anche dei giocchini, insomma, così sono delle cose che loro preferiscono rispetto ad andare in un ristorante normale dove si potrebbero annoiare o insomma, giustamente dicono io che faccio, non puoi pretendere che un bambino sia due ore seduto vicino alla tavola, no? E quindi scegliendo questa tipologia di ristoranti oppure che offrono questo tipo di servizio con giostrine oppure sedioline colorate, piatti colorati, loro ci vanno più volentieri, tipo family restaurant.

**Federica:** Ok. C'è qualcosa, qualche concetto a cui tu hai pensato potrebbe essere utile, per cui non hai trovato un'immagine?

**Mariateresa:** No, il fatto è che comunque qua in Campania non è ancora diffusa quest'idea di family restaurant, oppure non è ben visto il fatto che un bambino vada al ristorante. Spesso mi è capitato di dire veniamo più presto, veniamo con bambini e spesso mi è stato detto di no oppure addirittura che non accettano bambini, che non accettano bambini a quell'orario perché c'è troppa gente e spesso non mi danno neanche il Sediolone capito? Quindi mancano proprio i servizi. Oppure che ne so, magari nel bagno non ci sta il fasciatoio per cambiare i bambini.

**Federica:** Questo hai detto al sud o in generale?

**Mariateresa:** No, qua in Campania

**Federica:** quindi ci sono delle situazioni in cui li hai trovati i servizi

**Mariateresa:** Sì, sì. No, ma anche in Campania ho trovato poi situazioni adatte alle famiglie, con i bagni più colorati per esempio, quindi che ti invogliano, comunque hanno tutti i servizi per i bambini e quindi tu giustamente sei invogliato ad andare più lì piuttosto che da un'altra parte.

**Federica:** E perché I bambini poi mangiano più tranquillamente lì?

**Mariateresa:** eh perché si sentono a proprio agio. Se vai in un ristorante che non ti dà neanche il sediolone che il sediolone alla fine non è soltanto una gabbia, ma è anche una sedia più alta per farli stare più comodi. Se vai in un ristorante che neanche il sediolone ti dà o comunque non ti dà neanche la possibilità di andare in bagno e cammbiarlo un attimo, Il bambino anche. ad un certo punto è scomodo, capito? Oppure non so se ti è mai capitato di andare da Gino a Nola, a San Vitaliano? Eh, non so se sei entrata nei bagni? No, no, lo conosco. vabbè, a parte il locale che è Carino, bagni sono bellissimi ma sono tutti colorati. Ogni tanto cambia questi stickers eccetera e poi lì per esempio ora ha anche un menù per i bambini e ti dà anche un regalino però in più li c'ha dei giochini di legno per poter intrattenere i bambini e farli giocare. E poi fa il gelato con gli Smarties, sai cose più adatte ai bambini ovviamente. Cioè Giulia se ricorda Gino, ogni tanto va giù, vogliamo andare in quel pub. No, voglio andare a Gino, preferisco andare da Gino perché c'ha il suo gelato preferito, c'ha il suo gusto preferito. C'hai i giochini che ti puoi intrattenere e quindi non ti devi, porta ogni volta da casa. Noi ci portiamo ogni volta la valigetta per farli stare tranquilli. Vuoi mettere che vai in un ristorante che già ha i colori, ti da i giochini, ogni tanto li cambi. Poi ecco, se vuoi andare in bagno c'hai tutti i servizi, la c'hai il lavandino un po più basso per lavare le mani, il vasino più basso Adatto a loro quindi, e ti invoglia di più.

**Federica:** Ok. Poi prendimi tutte le immagini che hai portato e raggruppa le per qualche caratteristica, per qualche concetto secondo cui per te sono rilevanti fra loro, sono coerenti. Per esempio, tutta la verdura, che sono accomunabili fra loro per qualcosa.

**Mariateresa:** Allora le immagini della frutta e della verdura per me significano cibo sano. Ehm, c'è il panino i teneroni perché per me erano un'utopia da far mangiare ai bambini, soprattutto al più piccolo. E quindi ecco, sono anche contenta che grazie a questa cosa loro riescono a mangiare anche al di fuori del cibo comune o comunque del cibo sano. No, se serve una cosa veloce sai che puoi andare a prendere un panino, una cosa che si cuoce in 5 minuti rper loro va bene e poi vabbè, i giochi perché? Invogliano di più i bambini ad uscire e a mangiare, a farli sentire a proprio agio. Insomma, al di fuori dell'habitat loro.

Federica: Quindi abbiamo detto come categorie, cibo sano, cose più comode e diverse e poi il concetto di gioco. Ora selezionami tra questi gruppi, due che sono utilizzabili insieme o comunque affini, quello più diverso oppure se sono secondo te tutti e tre diversi..?

**Mariateresa:** Tutte le immagini sicuramente potrebbero andare insieme, nel senso che potrebbero dare più scelta. Ai bambini non. Nel scegliere di mangiare una cosa, cioè nel senso. Mettere tutto insieme, sia cibo sano che frutta che cibo non sano, no? Potrebbe essere una scelta in più da dare ai bambini e non, per esempio il classico pennette al pomodoro.

Federica: però, se noi vogliamo convincerli a mangiare le cose sane, potrebbe essere utile tenere tutti insieme oppure presentare solamente le cose sane, senza dare proprio l'occasione di trovare il panino.

**Mariateresa:** Per dire, per me può essere una scelta. Più mo al di là del panino, puntualmente quando vai ai ristoranti, o comunque quando anche se vai a cena a casa di una persona, no? Che prepara i bambini cotolette, patatine e pennette al pomodoro. Mo la Pennetta al pomodoro, comunque la cotoletta se non frita potrebbe essere una cosa sana. Però perchè ai bambini si va a mangiare sempre la Pennetta al pomodoro,? c'è anche la pasta e zucchine o la pasta ai broccoli potrebbe essere un'altra. Ok, magari non ti piace quella verdura. Però ecco proporre anche un'altra cosa, la scelta potrebbe essere interessante.

**Federica:** Per esempio, utilizzare il concetto di giochi? il nostro obiettivo è quello di portarli a fare proprio quella scelta che vogliamo noi, ad esdell'insalata, magari utilizzare il gioco solamente per dove stanno le cose salutari piuttosto che... Cioè, secondo te potrebbe essere utile usare una strategia solo per quelle ed escludere le. Cose non salutari?

**Mariateresa:** Si tipo nella scuola dove sono escluse le frittture, mi sembra e le cose precongelate insomma prefritte eccetera. Sì, assolutamente, cioè potrebbe essere un incentivo in più quello di far capire ai bambini l'importanza della varietà della verdura e della frutta.

**Federica:** Spiegami un po come funziona a scuola questa cosa?

**Mariateresa:** Allora io c'ho sia l'esperienza della scuola pubblica che della scuola privata a scuola pubblica mi sembra che c'è una nutrizionista che fa un menù mensile. Eh? Per i bambini e ogni giorno ci sta un primo che contiene già la verdura e un secondo. Quindi già il fatto che non accomunano la verdura al secondo per me è sbagliato, perché di conseguenza anche a casa non lo mangiano. La frutta, per esempio, è esclusa dalla scuola pubblica. Mi sembra soltanto che una volta al mese Loro regalano ai bambini un frutto di stagione che poi puntualmente la mela e la banana però non lo fanno mangiare a scuola. Voi perché le maestre non possono mettersi a tagliare, E quindi cioè capito, regalare ai bambini questa cosa per me non ha senso poi, per esempio, come merenda loro suggerivano di mandare uno yogurt, però lo yogurt va in frigo, loro il frigo non c'è. L'hanno. E quindi come pretendi che io ti Mando lo yogurt se poi va a male

essenzialmente? Alla scuola privata, invece è diverso nel momento in cui i bambini compiono tre anni, loro fanno il primo e noi mandiamo un secondo con un contorno e la frutta a nostra discrezione. Loro hanno il frigo, quindi consigliano lo yogurt. Possiamo mandare pure lo yogurt alla scuola privata, per esempio, ho riscontrato un approccio diverso con il cibo e ci tengono di più, è vero che il loro menù è fisso, quindi tutti i giorni tutto l'anno mangiano sempre la stessa cosa, però per esempio mangiano i legumi due volte a settimana, mangiano il primo con le verdure di stagione degli altri giorni. Insomma, il secondo lo mandiamo noi e però noi possiamo mandare anche la verdura ai bambini separata dal primo e quindi in questo modo, insomma, i bambini iniziano a capire che la verdura è separata dal primo e quindi possono mangiare anche un'altra cosa in più.

**Federica:** Ok, adesso abbiamo detto che i tre gruppi che abbiamo creato sono cibo sano, concetto di gioco e le cose diverse e comode. secondo te, in ordine di importanza, qual è il più importante, cioè proprio una classifica, di cosa potrebbe essere più utile per me

**Mariateresa:** per me potrebbero andare al primo posto le immagini con le verdure, seguite dalla frutta sì. Quindi cibo sano, poi successivamente l'immagine del panino. Quindi le cose comode e quindi anche dei teneroni e successivamente quello dei giochi.

**Federica:** tra tutte le immagini che mi hai portato, scegli quella più importante è perché è quella meno importante e perché?

**Mariateresa:** Allora ti posso dire quella più importante per me potrebbero essere i giochi, perché ad oggi i miei bambini mangiano qualsiasi cosa. E infatti quando andiamo in qualsiasi tipo di posto noi portiamo già dei giochi con noi E quindi loro stanno tranquilli, se il ristorante offre altro per loro è una spinta in più ad andare a mangiare e stare la insomma tranquillamente eh, quella meno importante. Ad oggi per me potrebbe essere quella del fast food, cibo comodo, i teneroni.

**Federica:** Come ti immagineresti un intervento proprio che non funziona, cioè io che devo creare questo menu come te lo immagino avanti agli occhi in modo tale che i bambini, proprio quelle cose non le scelgono? Cos'è che sarebbe per loro noioso, non li attira?

**Mariateresa:** il menu con tutte scritte, cioè il menù classico che offrono di solito senza immagini, senza carattere in rilievo, eccetera. Per me non funziona. uno perché non è attraente per noi adulti. Io mi scoccio di leggere c'è talmente della varietà delle cose che poi mi confondo le idee e quindi puntualmente poi scelgo sempre la stessa cosa. A maggior ragione per i bambini, può essere praticamente inutile e quindi poco attraente. Sono anche quelle cose che poi di solito portano a scegliere a me per loro piuttosto che a far scegliere loro. Insomma, magari sai, non vengono attirati dalle immagini.

**Federica:** Quindi sarebbe più importante mettere un'immagine piuttosto che una scritta.



**Mariateresa:** Assolutamente, per me il menu con le immagini è una cosa da fare ovunque. Pure per gli adulti a prescindere. non so se ti ricordi quando Apri all'inizio Gaetano paoella, proprio all'inizio inizio aveva un libro, su ogni foglio che giravi c'era l'immagine della pizza e con sotto scritto in piccolino gli ingredienti che c'erano sopra tu non andavi manco a leggere, vedevi la pizza, voglio questo. Era molto più intuitivo, ad oggi che esistono pure i menù digitali. No, perché magari un menù con tante immagini potrebbe risultare grande, pesante, difficile eccetera, ma ad oggi la maggior parte c'ha i menu digitali no? Post Covid, quindi tu scannerizzi il QR Code, perché non introdurre le immagini lì Al posto di farsi cartacei anche inutili.

**Federica:** poi collegami le immagini che hai portato ai 5 sensi, gusto, olfatto, tatto, colore.

**Mariateresa:** allora probabilmente boh al tatto mi è difficile collegare qualche immagine.

**Federica:** e allora no, OK, passiamo al prossimo,

**Mariateresa:** Sicuramente, alla vista tutte quelle che riguardano le emoji, quindi la frutta e la verdura potrebbero essere più carine, anche se poi non rispecchiano al 100% quello che ci sarà nel piatto perché sono troppo cartoonizzate.

**Federica:** In cui mi immagino pure la delusione dei bambini.

**Mariateresa:** E all'olfatto non lo so.

**Federica:** Che magari non so se se loro si ricordano che profumo ha il tenerone.

**Mariateresa:** Eh però, sai cosa? Questi sono prosciutto cotto, ma in realtà non ti ricordi il profumo del prodotto perché sono cotti e quindi c'hanno proprio un altro sapore, un'altra cosa.

**Federica:** Come suono?

**Mariateresa:** E forse le immagini dei giochi.

**Federica:** E invece gusto?

**Mariateresa:** E vabbè gusto il panino.

**Federica:** Ok ultima attività. spiegami una storiella che parli della tua esperienza diretta, qualche esperienza che può essere rilevante e importante.

**Mariateresa:** Ok, Mi capita spesso no, spesso qualche volta che di andare al McDonald's con i bambini e dato che per noi adulti il McDonald's è sinonimo di. Boh, qualcosa di goloso e di sfizio per i miei bambini non è così, nel senso che puntualmente poi si trovano a scegliere, dato che lì effettivamente c'è una. Varia scelta di cose da mangiare, mi capita che loro poi scelgono non le patatine ma le carote e quindi poi ci è capitato che dopo il McDonald, grazie al taglio di queste carote, mia figlia ha iniziato a mangiare le carote e ho pure mio figlio. Il piccolo non sceglie la Coca Cola ma scegli l'Actimel, non scelgono il panino ma scelgono il toast al prosciutto. E quindi per noi quella è diventata un'esperienza quasi salutare, e da lì, insomma, ci ha fatto capire che poi i bambini, avendo varie scelte nelle cose, spesso poi tendono a scegliere cose, ecco più salutari piuttosto che junk food.

**Federica:** e la prima volta, per esempio, che Luca ha scelto l'Actimel, perché ha scelto proprio quello?

**Mariateresa:** E perché vicino all'Actimel del McDonald's e non vicino a quello normale Non so per quale motivo è disegnato un omino dell'astronauta con una fragola e quindi altri attirato questa cosa e da allora puntualmente andiamo al McDonald. La prima cosa che mangia prima del salato beve l'actimel e poi mangia il toast col prosciutto cotto.

**Federica:** Quindi, per concludere la domanda era, secondo te è efficace, utilizzare cartoni animati, personaggi animati sul menù per convincere i bambini a scegliere le cose salutari?

**Mariateresa:** Sì, assolutamente, perché con i miei figli funziona. E un'altra cosa che mi sono dimenticata di dirti è che per esempio, il piccolo non ama molto il pesce, però lo mangia, perché quando di solito andiamo ai ristoranti e ci portano per esempio le patatine sopra, ci mettono gli stuzzichini colorati e quindi da quella volta dissi, li devo comprare anch'io e ho comprato degli stuzzichini che sopra dopo ti faccio vedere c'hanno le macchinine, il fenicottero, la frutta, insomma colorati. E praticamente ogni. Volta che mangiamo il pesce metto stuzzichini sopra. E allora faccio chi vuole la macchinina, chi vuole il fenicottero e loro mangiano Tutto,

**Federica:** ma quindi tu quando proponi del cibo ai tuoi figli Lo racconti?

**Mariateresa:** Assolutamente sì, ogni piatto che cucino ha un nome e tipo che ne so. Pasta con le zucchine oppure pasta con i broccoli, con gli spinaci è sempre la pasta di Hulk, quindi la pasta che fa diventare più forte. la pasta di braccio di ferro, quindi ogni cosa eh. La pasta arancione che con la zucca che loro non amano tanto, è la pasta di Bing, perché a Bing piacciono le carote, quindi ogni piatto.

**Federica:** Quindi potrebbe essere utile anche oltre all'immagine, dare il nome A quel piatti?

**Mariateresa:** ,a anche secondo me, per giustificare la scelta di quel cibo, perché ci fai la pasta con la zucca, perché ci fai la pasta con le carote perché le carote sono salutari perché servono per la vitamina D, per il sole eccetera e quindi loro sono più contenti di mangiare questa cosa.

**Federica:** Ehi, ma quindi tu spieghi anche i tuoi figli quando gli dai qualcosa da mangiare perché gliela stai facendo mangiare?

**Mariateresa:** Sì, sì, tuttora le cose legate alla frutta arancione in estate, quindi le albicocche. L'altro giorno Giulia, mamma, quando ci dai le albicocche le albicocche sono arancioni, ci serve per il sole, tra un po andiamo al mare e quindi sì.

**Federica:** Grazie mille per il tuo tempo, sei stata molto chiara. sei consapevole, dai consenso all'uso di queste informazioni?

**Mariateresa:** Sì, Assolutamente sì.

**Federica:** grazie.

Federica: Hello everyone, I'm Federica Petrella, a marketing student at Luiss Guido Carli and I'm conducting a research project for my thesis focused on the use of cartoonized spokescharacters on restaurant menus as a nudge to promote healthier food choices among the children. Today I am here with Maria Teresa Caliendo, who has received a series of instructions and guidelines to follow on the topic of my research and I have asked her to take photographs or collect images that could respond to the need to understand the effectiveness of the intervention, through the expression of his thoughts and opinions, the figure represents the hypothetical modified menu with a generic superhero that I presented to the participants a few days before the interviews in order to have a clear idea of what they should comment. Mariateresa is the mother of Giulia and Luca, aged four and two. So I all have steps to follow, let's start from the first. Tell me, describe the images you brought and what is the motivation behind it?

Mariateresa: Most of the images I have chosen concern fruit and vegetables because I have often heard other mothers speak who demonize the role of fruit and vegetables in children. In my case this was not the case because my children love fruit in particular and I think this is due to the fact that we have always had an approach to food through this type of image. So this, in short, was the choice of this typology, i.e. this was the motivation for choosing these images. As for the other images, I was inspired by the cartoons they usually watch, therefore Bing and Masha and the bear, because they often talked about these foods during the cartoons that they never wanted to taste or I never prepared for them. Thanks to these cartoons, they chose to taste them and then they started eating them from that moment on.

Federica: Can you describe to me specifically what each image contains? How many are there first?

Maria Theresa: 14.

Federica: Okay. Let's go image by image, first you describe the content to me and then you explain to me.

Mariateresa: So the first image is about fruit, like EMOTICON. Each fruit represents a happy smiley and therefore I chose this image, because it seems to me a happy idea of fruit and therefore it can be a nice idea to let children taste new fruits. So, as I said they are very happy to eat fruit, that is, they would always eat fruit even for breakfast. The same goes for the superhero-shaped salad and the zucchini, which represents another emoji, in short, and also the other vegetables. They're usually reluctant to eat like broccoli because it's not in season all year round, when broccoli season arrives they maybe didn't remember having eaten it before and so thanks to this type of image I can usually get them to eat it. Maybe I explain to them the characteristics of each vegetable, the vitamins they contain, because they are good because they are needed and they, consequently, taste them and usually we are also inclined to give a name to the dish, so perhaps

we associate green vegetables with the dish of Hulk rather than Bing's pasta if it is with carrot or with pumpkin yes orange and so on. They are happy to taste. As for the sandwich, I chose it because I have children, especially the youngest, I thought it would be difficult to get them to eat a sandwich away from home, also because at home I usually feed them complete meals with carbohydrates which can be pasta, the second course, is easier for me, but when we're away from home it's easier to bring a sandwich. Initially I thought it was difficult or that in any case they were reluctant to eat them and instead you want McDonald's, which in any case is good at fast food in general for this thing. But nothing, in short, this image looked nice, because it was a complete sandwich.

Federica: Is zucchini also a superhero?

Mariateresa: No, the courgette is an emoji and a happy emoji. Instead, regarding. The sweeties of both Masha and the bear and Looney Tunes this is a type of food that I would never buy for children or usually do not eat myself. But they were attracted by these images and therefore consequently I had to buy them. They wanted to taste them and so when I understood that there is this association on their part with cartoons or in any case with characters they recognize, I understood that since it works in this way, I have done the same for other foods as well. Ok instead the choice of emoticons is due to the fact that children recognize them today and therefore it could have been nice to create a menu for children to make them recognize and to make them read even to children who cannot read yet. And instead as regards the playgrounds and playgrounds that I have chosen or the kits that they sometimes give out in restaurants, I happened to go to restaurants where they give out kits for children to color or draw, or in some restaurants where they have plates and cutlery, glasses all in the shape of a child, therefore plastic, not glass, more colorful with particular handles, they also give you little toys, in short, so they are things they prefer compared to going to a normal restaurant where you they could be boring or in short, they rightly say what I do, you can't expect a child to sit near the table for two hours, can you? And therefore by choosing this type of restaurant or one that offers this type of service with carousels or colored chairs, colored dishes, they go there more willingly, like a family restaurant.

Federica: Okay. Is there something, some concept that you've been thinking about that might be useful, that you haven't found an image for?

Mariateresa: No, the fact is that in any case here in Campania this idea of a family restaurant is not yet widespread, or the fact that a child goes to a restaurant is not welcomed. I have often said let's come earlier, we come with children and I have often been told no or even that they don't accept children, that they don't accept children at that time because there are too many people and often they don't even give me the big chair Understood? So services are really missing. Or what do I know, maybe in the bathroom there is no changing table to change the babies.

Federica: Did you say this in the south or in general?

Mariateresa: No, here in Campania

Federica: so there are situations in which you found services

Maria Teresa: Yes, yes. No, but also in Campania I found situations suitable for families, with more colorful bathrooms for example, so that they entice you, however they have all the services for children and therefore you are rightly more tempted to go there rather than from a other side.

Federica: And why do the children eat more calmly there?

Mariateresa: eh because they feel at ease. If you go to a restaurant that doesn't even give you a high chair, in the end the high chair is not only a cage, but also a higher chair to make them more comfortable. If you go to a restaurant that doesn't even give you a high chair or at least doesn't even give you the chance to go to the bathroom and change it for a moment, the baby too. at some point it's uncomfortable, understand? Or I don't know if you've ever gone to Gino's in Nola, in San Vitaliano? Eh, I don't know if you went into the toilets? No, no, I know him. oh well, apart from the place which is cute, the bathrooms are beautiful but they are all coloured. Every now and then he changes these stickers and so on and then, for example, he now also has a menu for children and he also gives you a little gift, but in addition he has wooden toys to entertain the children and let them play.

And then he makes ice cream with Smarties, you know things that are more suitable for children of course. That is, if Giulia remembers Gino, every now and then she goes down, we want to go to that pub. No, I want to go to Gino's, I prefer to go to Gino's because he has his favorite ice cream, he has his favorite flavour. You have games that you can entertain yourself and therefore you don't have to, bring from home every time. We carry the briefcase with us every time to keep them calm. You want to say that you go to a restaurant that already has colors, they give you games, you change them every now and then. Then here, if you want to go to the bathroom, you have all the facilities, there is a slightly lower sink for washing your hands, a lower potty. Therefore, it is suitable for them, and it makes you want more.

Federica: Okay. Then take all the images you have brought and group them by some characteristic, by some concept according to which they are relevant to each other, they are coherent. For example, all vegetables, which are similar to each other for something.

Mariateresa: So the images of fruit and vegetables for me mean healthy food. Um, there's the tenderloin sandwich because for me they were a utopia for children to eat, especially the youngest. And so here, I'm also happy that thanks to this thing they are able to eat even outside of common food or in any case healthy food. No, if you need something quick you know you can go get a sandwich, something that cooks in 5 minutes is fine for them and then oh well, games why? They

encourage children to go out and eat more, to make them feel at ease. In short, outside their habitat.

Federica: So we said categories, healthy food, more comfortable and different things and then the concept of play. Now select me among these groups, two that can be used together or in any case similar, the one that is more different or if in your opinion all three are different..?

Mariateresa: All the images could certainly go together, in the sense that they could give more choice. Not for children. In choosing to eat one thing, that is in the sense. Put it all together, both healthy food and fruit and unhealthy food, right? It could be an extra choice to give to children and not, for example the classic penne with tomato sauce.

Federica: however, if we want to convince them to eat healthy things, it could be useful to keep everyone together or to present only healthy things, without giving them the opportunity to find the sandwich.

Mariateresa: To say, for me it can be a choice. More than just the sandwich, punctually when you go to restaurants, or in any case when you go to someone's house for dinner, right? Who prepares cutlets, chips and penne pasta with tomato sauce for the children. Mo the Pennetta with tomato sauce, however the cutlet if not fried could be a healthy thing. But why do children always go to eat Pennetta with tomato sauce? there is also pasta and zucchini or broccoli pasta might be another. Okay, maybe you don't like that veggie. But here is also proposing another thing, the choice could be interesting.

Federica: For example, use the concept of games? our goal is to get them to make exactly the choice we want, e.g. salad, maybe use the game only for where healthy things are rather than... I mean, do you think it could be useful to use a strategy only for those and exclude the. Unhealthy things?

Mariateresa: Yes, like in the school where fried foods are excluded, it seems to me and pre-frozen things, in short, pre-fried and so on. Yes, absolutely, that is, it could be an extra incentive to make children understand the importance of variety in vegetables and fruit.

Federica: Explain to me how this thing works at school?

Mariateresa: So I have both the experience of public school and private school. At public school it seems to me that there is a nutritionist who prepares a monthly menu. Huh? For children and every day there is a first course that already contains vegetables and a second course. So the fact that they don't share vegetables with the main course is already wrong for me, because consequently they don't eat it even at home. Fruit, for example, is excluded from public school. It just seems to me that once a month they give the children a seasonal fruit which they then punctually don't let them eat at school. You because the teachers can't start cutting, and so that is understood, giving the children this thing doesn't make sense to me then, for example, as a snack

they suggested sending a yoghurt, but the yoghurt goes in the fridge, they don't have the fridge there is. They have it. So how do you expect me to send you the yogurt if it essentially goes bad? At private school, however, it is different when the children turn three, they do the first and we send a second with a side dish and fruit at our discretion. They have a fridge, so they recommend the yoghurt. We can also send the yogurt to the private school, for example, I've found a different approach to food and they care more, it's true that their menu is fixed, so they always eat the same thing every day all year round, however for example they eat legumes twice a week, they eat the first one with seasonal vegetables from the other days. In short, we send the second course but we can also send the vegetables to the children separate from the first and therefore in this way, in short, the children begin to understand that the vegetable is separate from the first and therefore they can also eat something else more.

Federica: Ok, now we have said that the three groups we have created are healthy food, game concept and different and comfortable things. in your opinion, in order of importance, which is the most important, that is, a ranking, of what could be more useful for me

Mariateresa: for me the images with vegetables could go first, followed by fruit yes. Then healthy food, then later the sandwich image. So comfortable things and therefore also softies and then that of games.

Federica: out of all the images you brought me, choose the most important one because it's the least important one and why?

Mariateresa: So I can tell you the most important thing for me could be games, because today my children eat anything. And in fact when we go to any kind of place we already bring games with us And so they stay calm, if the restaurant offers something else for them it's an extra push to go eat and stay there quietly eh, the least important one. To date for me it could be that of fast food, comfortable food, softies.

Federica: How would you imagine an intervention that really doesn't work, that is, I who have to create this menu as I imagine it before your eyes in such a way that the children don't choose those things exactly? What is it that would be boring for them that doesn't appeal to them?

Mariateresa: the menu with all the writing, that is the classic menu they usually offer without images, without character in relief, etc. It doesn't work for me. one because it's unappealing to us adults. I get bored of reading there is so much variety of things that then I get confused and then punctually then I always choose the same thing. Even more so for children, it can be practically useless and therefore unattractive. It's also those things that then usually lead me to choose for them rather than making them choose. I mean, maybe you know, they're not attracted to images.

Federica: So it would be more important to put an image rather than writing.

Mariateresa: Absolutely, for me the picture menu is something to do everywhere. Even for adults regardless. I don't know if you remember when Open at the beginning Gaetano paoella, right at the beginning he had a book, on each sheet that you turned over there was an image of the pizza and with the ingredients on it written in small letters below you don't you didn't even read, you saw the pizza, I want this. It was much more intuitive, now that there are even digital menus. No, because perhaps a menu with many images could be large, heavy, difficult, etc., but today most of us have digital menus, don't they? Post Covid, so you scan the QR Code, why not introduce the images there Instead of making paper even useless.

Federica: then connect me the images you brought to the 5 senses, taste, smell, touch, color.

Mariateresa: then probably boh to the touch it's difficult for me to connect some images.

Federica: well no, OK, let's move on to the next one,

Mariateresa: Certainly, to the eye all those concerning emojis, so fruit and vegetables could be prettier, even if they don't reflect 100% what will be on the plate because they are too cartoony.

Federica: In which I also imagine the disappointment of the children.

Mariateresa: And I don't know about the smell.

Federica: Maybe I don't know if they remember what the softie smells like.

Mariateresa: Well, you know what? These are cooked ham, but in reality you don't remember the scent of the product because they are cooked and therefore have another flavour, something else.

Federica: How do I play?

Mariateresa: And maybe the pictures of the games.

Federica: And instead taste?

Mariateresa: Oh well, I'll taste the sandwich.

Federica: Ok last activity. tell me a little story that speaks of your direct experience, some experience that may be relevant and important.

Mariateresa: Ok, I often don't, often sometimes I go to McDonald's with children and since for us adults McDonald's is synonymous with. Dunno, something delicious and a treat for my children is not so, in the sense that they then promptly find themselves choosing, since there actually is one there. Varied choice of things to eat, it happens to me that they then choose not the fries but the carrots and then it happened that after the McDonald's, thanks to the cutting of these carrots, my daughter started eating carrots and I also have my son . The little one doesn't choose Coca Cola but choose Actimel, they don't choose the sandwich but they choose the ham toast. And so for us that has become an almost healthy experience, and from there, in short, it made us understand that children, having various choices in things, often tend to choose things that are healthier rather than junk food.



Federica: and the first time, for example, that Luca chose Actimel, why did he choose exactly that?

Mariateresa: And because near the McDonald's Actimel and not near the normal one I don't know why a little astronaut man with a strawberry is drawn and therefore others attracted this thing and since then we have been going to McDonald's regularly. The first thing he eats before the salty drinks the actimel and then eats the toast with cooked ham.

Federica: So, to conclude the question was, in your opinion is it effective to use cartoons, animated characters on the menu to convince children to choose healthy things?

Mariateresa: Yes, absolutely, because it works with my children. And another thing I forgot to tell you is that, for example, the little one doesn't really like fish, but he eats it, because when we usually go to restaurants and they bring us chips, for example, on top of them, they put colorful and so from that time on I said, I have to buy them too and I bought some appetizers which I'll show you above later have toy cars, a flamingo, fruit, in short, coloured. And practically every. Once we eat fish, I put appetizers on top. And then I do who wants the car, who wants the flamingo and they eat everything,

Federica: but so when you offer food to your children you tell it?

Mariateresa: Absolutely yes, every dish I cook has a name and type that I don't know. Pasta with zucchini or pasta with broccoli, with spinach it's always the Hulk's pasta, so the pasta that makes you stronger. the arm wrestling pasta, so every thing huh. The orange pasta that with the pumpkin that they don't like so much, is Bing's pasta, because Bing likes carrots, so every dish.

Federica: So besides the image, could it be useful to name those dishes?

Mariateresa: also in my opinion, to justify the choice of that food, why do you make pasta with pumpkin, why do you make pasta with carrots because carrots are healthy because they are used for vitamin D, for the sun, etc. and so they are happier to eat this thing.

Federica: Hey, so you also explain to your children when you give them something to eat why you're making them eat it?

Mariateresa: Yes, yes, still things related to orange fruit in the summer, so apricots. The other day Giulia, mum, when you give us apricots the apricots are orange, we need them for the sun, we'll go to the beach in a while and so yes.

Federica: Thank you very much for your time, you have been very clear. are you aware, do you consent to the use of this information?

Mariateresa: Yes, absolutely yes.

Federica: thank you.

**CONCETTA**

**Federica:** Allora buon pomeriggio sono Federica Petrella, studentessa di marketing alla Luiss Guido Carli e sto conducendo un progetto di ricerca per la mia tesi incentrato sull'utilizzo degli spokescharacters o portavoce cartoonizzati sui menù dei ristoranti come nudge per promuovere scelte alimentari più salutari tra i bambini. Oggi sono qui con Concetta Terracciano, psicologa operante nel Ludo policenter di Acerra, attività volte ad assistere i bambini sia sotto il profilo educativo disciplinare sia su quello psicologico cognitivo con attività differenziate in base all'età degli utenti e alle loro effettive esigenze e necessità. La partecipante ha ricevuto una serie di istruzioni e linee guida da seguire sul topic della mia ricerca e le ho chiesto di fare fotografie o raccogliere delle immagini che potessero rispondere all'esigenza di comprendere l'efficacia dell'intervento attraverso l'espressione dei suoi pensieri e opinioni. La figura rappresenta un'ipotetico meno modificato con un supereroe generico che ho presentato ai partecipanti qualche giorno prima delle interviste, al fine di avere un'idea chiara di ciò che avrebbero dovuto commentare.

**Titti:** Salve a tutti, sono Concetta Terracciano, sono una psicologa e oggi sono qui con Federica per rispondere alle sue domande.

Federica: Partiamo da quante immagini hai portato? Mi descrivi un pochino cosa c'è nelle immagini?

**Titti:** Allora io ho elaborato un pensiero di quanto possa essere, ehm, coinvolgibile un bambino a seconda delle immagini che entrano nella propria mente. Per cui rispetto a un, diciamo a un percorso alimentare cosa può condizionare un bambino e cosa no. I bambini vengono sottoposti continuamente ad immagini e queste immagini sono fondamentali perché i bambini vanno per associazione no, perché fanno, hanno attivazione di una memoria che si chiama memoria semantica. Quindi attivano tutti i fatti, tutte le informazioni che recepiscono dall'ambiente esterno, entrano in un magazzino no e quindi vengono registrate e immagazzinate e quindi fanno sì che il bambino arricchisca sempre di più il proprio bagaglio con tutte le informazioni che recepisce. Esterno quello che sicuramente è. Più efficace per i bambini sono le immagini che gli arrivano perché l'immagine rimane molto di più nella memoria di un bambino di quanto non possa rimanere una frase, un'affermazione, un detto esplicito, quindi un verbale. In realtà potremmo definirle non verbali, ma potremmo definirle anche immagini, fotografie, informazioni che vengono detenute dai bambini. La cosa importante è che quando un bambino mangia, non mangia solo con l'organo di senso, che il gusto ma attiva, tutti gli altri organi di senso che sono ovviamente l'olfatto, perché i cibi emanano degli odori? Attivano la vista, quindi loro guardano e percepiscono anche i colori di ciò che mangiano. E infatti alcuni bambini. Ehm, hanno si dice in gergo una selettività alimentare perché prediligono solo determinati cibi, magari del colore, per

forma, per odore, per gusto, e quindi focalizzano la loro alimentazione. Solo su una determinata parte di alimenti. e invece ci sono bambini che sono più curiosi, che sono più ricettivi, per cui si lasciano coinvolgere da tutto quello che invece vedono no da tutto quello che percepiscono, da tutto quello che sentono. Io ho cercato di fare un lavoro proprio di associazione di immagine a sensazioni ed emozioni e ricettività nei bambini. La prima immagine che ho sott'occhio è l'immagine del Topolino di Ratatouille, il Topolino di Ratatouille. Come tutti sanno, è uno chef e scopre di avere questa passione e quindi di nascosto si intrufola in una cucina di un noto ristorante e addirittura la critica culinaria ne tesse le lodi. La ovviamente è ambientato a Parigi, per cui in questo film si vedono tutte i classici cibi della cucina, diciamo francese, ma quello che salta più alla mente è sicuramente la ratatouille di verdure, composta ovviamente da verdure tagliate a rondelle che si predispongono in una teglia disposte a raggiera. E è difficile che un bambino abbia la voglia di assaggiare le verdure, no? Cioè i bambini hanno sempre resistenza ad assaggiare le verdure, ma mi è capitato anche con i miei bambini, cioè i miei figli che vedessero ratatouille e che avessero voglia di non solo prepararla, ma proprio di assaggiarla. E ci sono le zucchine, ci possono essere le patate, i pomodori e quindi c'è anche una vicinanza, un avvicinamento del bambino a un cibo anche salutare, per cui non sempre il cartone è sinonimo di negatività, no? Cioè di approccio negativo al cibo, in questo caso ha un approccio positivo perché già anche a noi adulti no, già quando vedi solo il posizionamento delle verdure, i colori di queste verdure e magari il fumo no, per visione che emanano in associazione arriva questo impulso al cervello che fa salivare un po' come avviene nella teoria cognitivo comportamentale di Pavlov con la con la salivazione del cane, cioè praticamente Pavlov fa questo esperimento? mette il cibo del cane nel suo contenitore e poi lo mette da lontano, no, e capisce che alla sola vista del cibo che al cane piace, il cane saliva per cui si ha proprio l'attivazione della salivazione alla sola vista. quindi diciamo che ratatouille è un'immagine positiva. Andiamo avanti. la seconda immagine è quella di lilli e il vagabondo. No, di questo bellissimo piatto di spaghetti con le polpette e diciamo che qui c'è meno coinvolgimento, nel senso che ai bambini già di base piace il sugo di pomodoro, quindi un cibo che generalmente viene sottoposto ai bambini da quando sono piccoli no il pomodoro e quindi loro non hanno difficoltà perché il gusto è dolce, intenso, per cui sono abituati gli spaghetti sono diciamo un cibo molto italiano perché noi li utilizziamo nella nostra cucina e le polpette sono cose che ai bambini vengono date no, cioè proprio anche quando sono piccoli per secondo piatto, per cui non fanno fatica ad avvicinarsi a questo tipo di cibo, ma sicuramente sono più invogliati, perché già la vista di questi due cagnolini paffutelli che si sono innamorati, che condividono questo cibo, viene quasi voglia di mangiarlo, per cui c'è sempre una propensione a alla sola vista no, quindi vediamo quanto il gusto ancora non è implicato e già è attivata la salivazione e quindi la voglia di mangiare questo piatto. Passiamo alla terza immagine e non ci

allontaniamo dalle polpette, no, c'è questo film che si chiama “piovono polpette” dove non piovono polpette ma piove cibo di ogni tipo e il solo pensiero, cioè i bambini vengono affascinati dal solo pensiero che questo cibo piova dall'alto no quasi come una pioggia e la quantità di cibo e la modalità per cui, per come viene proposto, no, colore, forma, modalità, la meraviglia negli occhi di questi protagonisti invoglia a mangiare no, a me è capitato spesso che i miei figli mi chiedano un cibo dopo che hanno visto il cartone quasi a mo di curiosità di approccio. se lo hanno già sperimentato, come nel caso delle polpette, mi chiedono quelle polpette, cioè quel tipo di polpetta, no? Quasi come a dire, io ho sempre mangiato le polpette, ma voglio quelle polpette perché mi invoglia a mangiare. Magari saranno diverse, OK? Se non lo hanno proprio assaggiato, come nel caso di altri film come per esempio di altri cartoni come la Ratatouille, vogliono assaggiare quel cibo per cui è importante in questo, in questo caso, che chi produce cartoni animati o chi li crea e chi ha l'idea generi un cartone che invoglia i bambini a mangiare del cibo sano. andiamo avanti.

**Federica:** eh devono piovere finocchi.

**Titti:** Questa è un'immagine proprio dolce. Eh metaforicamente, non mi allontana, è l'immagine di Winnie The Pooh che si mangia il suo miele. Ho scelto questa immagine, la descrivo perché Winnie in questo caso ha il cappellino e molto sorridente si è messo anche il bavaglino, ha una bellissima ciotola di miele e con grande entusiasmo si appresta a mangiarlo. No, quindi per un bambino che non ha mai assaggiato miele o che non gli piace il miele perché è abituato magari allo zucchero che vabbè, in questo caso apriamo parentesi, non fa tanto bene uno zucchero raffinato, invece il miele sì, potrebbe essere invogliato ad assaggiare il miele e quindi magari aggiungerlo al latte la mattina o aggiungerlo a una Macedonia di frutta piuttosto che a uno yogurt, no o addirittura sul pane, no sul pane al posto di pane e marmellata che comunque è salutare anche pane e. Miele, proprio perché si può far associare l'immagine a winnie no e al piacere che prova winnie proprio nel mangiare il miele.

**Federica:** Quindi, per emulazione, diciamo?

**Titti:** per imitazione. Chi di noi non è cresciuto a spinaci? Braccio di ferro, spinaci, i muscoli diventare forti, ingerire spinaci e subito, acquistare la forza. tutti questi bambini che hanno diciamo dei supereroi come punto di riferimento, forza, muscoli grandi imprese, arrampicarsi sui palazzi come fa per esempio Spider-Man, avere braccio di ferro che è vero che un cartone un po più datato, ma comunque rimane nella storia del cartone e nell'associazione dello Spinacio no che. È importante, insomma, che lui possa essere data di nuovo gloria, di nuovo a braccio di ferro proprio per questo .mi ricordo quando io ero piccola, c'erano addirittura delle delle gomme da masticare a forma di spinaci, proprio perché, insomma, c'era braccio di ferro che andava lì. E gli spinaci per i bambini sono fondamentali perché in associazione, per esempio al limone no a OK,

gli spinaci al limone sono anche una fonte di vitamina C molto importante, no? Insieme proprio l'Associazione, per cui anche per esempio, mi viene di una frittata con gli spinaci, no? I bambini vengono invogliati a mangiarla. L'altra immagine è un po' meno salutare, ma è nella memoria di tutti noi. Sono i famosi dorayaki di doraemon. No, e vabbè, diciamo che sono dei pancake con all'interno della crema di cioccolato e effettivamente Non sono molto. Salutari, ma se pensiamo ai pancake che oggi facciamo no anche al mattino, poi parecchi nutrizionisti consigliano di mangiare i pancake no? Quindi, che utilizzano per esempio le diete proteiche, per cui non è proprio un cibo spazzatura completo perché se fatto nella maniera giusta, magari con uno sciroppo d'acero, magari con del miele e con della frutta Presentato al mattino per colazione può essere un cibo anche sano, per cui utilizzare lo strumento, quindi utilizzare doraemon come veicolo per far arrivare ai bambini e trasformare il cibo in cibo sano anche un cibo che magari apparentemente non può esserlo. Io parlo veloce. Ok. Un'ultima immagine che non ho, che però mi viene alla mente è il cartone di Teen Titans go che è un cartone che i miei bambini guardano e che però faccio un'associazione negativa in questo caso perché E c'è molta fantascienza, cioè c'è molto allontanamento dalla realtà, perché loro mangiano questo cibo che non ha una consistenza specifica, che non ha un'identità specifica, che non si capisce, è orientale piuttosto che occidentale. Ma la cosa fondamentale è che lo mangi in una maniera vorace, no? Cioè assumono questo cibo sì, questo cibo quasi ingurgitando. No, però non dando Un senso, invece il cibo va assaporato perché, come dicevo prima va mangiato con tutti gli organi di senso, va annusato, va visto, va guardato e quindi va data un'identità al cibo in modo tale che rimanga nel ricordo dei bambini.

Ah invece Francesco essendo più grande, ha attraversato l'epoca dei cartoni della Walt Disney per cui attraversato quest'epoca in cui tutti questi cartoni raccontavano delle storie e il cibo era un veicolo, un modo per incontrarsi, un coinvolgimento, un modo per darsi un tempo, una situazione, come nel caso di Lilly e il vagabondo, la condivisione. per cui è tutto correlato.

**Federica:** allora Di tutte le prendi tutte le immagini che mi hai portato raggruppale, anche se un pochino già l'hai fatto mentre stavi parlando, raggruppale per argomento o per utilità, e facciamo dei gruppi quanti più gruppi vuoi, riesci a fare.

**Titti:** Ok. Allora il primo gruppo è il cibo sano. Per cui metterei la ratatouille, gli spaghetti. Gli spinaci di braccio di ferro, le polpette di piovono polpette e il miele di Winnie de Pooh. Lascerei fuori solo i dorayaki di doraemon.

**Federica:** Mhm sicura questo non vogliamo dividerlo ulteriormente?

**Titti:** E in che modo è? magari le verdura, quindi spinaci e ratatouille, la pasta e le polpette?

**Federica:** Il miele pure lo lasciamo qui invece. come la chiamiamo questa categoria, con cioè che cosa rappresenta?

**Titti:** Cibo comfort food in realtà il dorayaki, anche se, come dicevo prima, ci può stare. La trasformazione e ovviamente ai bambini non è che viene negato completamente il dolce no? Quello che è importante è non darglielo continuamente, per cui. Magari darglielo, insomma, in maniera limitata. E poi, se possibile, destrutturare completamente tutto il dolce, ma magari farglielo passare come colazione, no, piuttosto che come spuntino che pesante, quindi una colazione, magari con un pancake con della frutta, quindi associare anche della frutta che sana e magari con del miele. Quindi potremmo pure fare in associazioni dorayaki con il miele, magari cibi dolci potremmo anche fare quest'altra associazione.

**Federica:** Ehh. Infatti, infatti, la prossima cosa che ti chiedo è di accomunare quelli che sono poi tra questi tre gruppi, quelli che sono più simili fra loro,

**Titti:** Ok dorayaki e miele perché è dolce. Le verdure, come ti dicevo prima, quindi spinaci . E invece poi gli spaghetti che pasta con le polpette.

**Federica:** Ai fini della mia ricerca, quindi dell'efficacia, mettimi in ordine proprio una classifica di quelle che sono le cose principali, le strategie magari principali che mi hai detto di queste qui, di questi gruppi? Cosa usare, cosa posso fare per primo? Poi, cosa meno importante, cose più importanti, magari possiamo anche partire dall'immagine più importante e quindi associamo. Qual è secondo te quella più rappresentativa secondo te? qual è l'attività che tu pensi possa essere utile a me per il menu?

**Titti:** Allora la prima cosa, e cioè credo che l'immagine più rappresentativa è quella di Winnie the Pooh, perché innanzitutto viene in risalto la regola e il comportamento, cioè la regola, stare seduti a tavola regola è il comportamento, cioè tenere un comportamento consono a tavola e quindi questo può aiutare i bambini sia a casa sia nei contesti esterni, quindi tipo ristorante, pizzerie e quant'altro, perché cosa succede adesso che il bambino viene messo davanti a un tablet o un telefono per stare a tavola. Invece, magari utilizzando questo comportamento consono già da casa, già attraverso le immagini, i cartoni viene sottoposto, può dare un aiuto. Anche Perché a tavola bisogna starci, come dicevo prima, con anche gli altri organi di senso e con il piacere a starci, per cui vedere quest'immagine è proprio avere piacere a mangiare un determinato cibo con la regola, quindi con il bavaglio per non sporcarsi le posate giuste, per poterlo fare stare seduti composti e quindi appropiare a un cibo che ti piace, ma facendolo con una regola. Quindi credo che questa sia l'immagine più Consona,

**Titti:** poi immagino che serva anche per far scegliere l'insalata piuttosto che la cosa non Salutare se tu già hai delle regole

**Titti:** si insomma fai meno fatica perché paradossalmente la regola per il bambino non è una cosa negativa o si fa fatica a dargliela. I bambini hanno bisogno di regole, OK, perché le regole per i bambini sono come gli argini di un fiume. Se non ci sono argini fiume straripa, per cui se noi non

diamo regole il bambino andrà a ruota libera, e comincerà ad attivare tutta una serie di comportamenti disfunzionali, perché non sa come comportarsi, non perché non lo vuole fare, o non accetta di farlo, allora se uno comincia a dargli delle regole il bambino poi andrà in automatico perché è quella, la sua realtà e diventerà quella la sua realtà perché la consolida la fa sua.

**Federica:** OK, invece quella meno importante, meno rappresentativa di tutte le immagini?

**Titti:** Quella di doraemon, perché insomma Di cibo tra virgolette spazzatura o che sarebbe giusto limitare ai bambini se ne vede già tanto, per cui meno glielo si presenta meglio è.

**Federica:** E invece come ti immagineresti un menù che invece fa l'opposto di quello che voglio fare io, cioè non attira per niente i bambini ed i bambini non sono proprio attratti dalla cosa?

**Titti:** sicuramente delle verdure che hanno una consistenza strana, quindi, a vista delle verdure che hanno un odore sgradevole.

**Federica:** Però io dico sempre da un punto di vista di Carta.

**Titti:** Ok, i bambini da sempre appena sentono cavolo cavolfiore attivano queste sensazioni? No, perché? Perché il cavolo ha un odore sgradevole, anche se ha un buon sapore. Poi da adulti noi ne apprezziamo le doti. Però ha un odore sgradevole e una consistenza effettivamente strana. Quindi se legge cavolo attiva già no, perché va in associazione, e sicuramente una pasta grande, no? Un tipo di pasta molto grande, per cui il bambino fa fatica proprio ad afferrare, fa fatica a mangiare.

**Federica:** ah tu dici Dici proprio immagini sul menu.

**Titti:** Sì, i bambini sì, perché i bambini si annoiano, spesso si annoiano di mangiare, perché sono talmente curiosi che sono attratti da altro, per cui appena. Hanno mangiato un po no Per cui sono tra virgolette già un po sazi. Non continuano a mangiare perché magari ne so. Al ristorante ci sono le giostrine fuori piuttosto che la musica che li attira, piuttosto che un bambino che vuole giocare con loro, per cui per tenerli a tavola ci deve essere ci devono essere sicuramente delle immagini che lo coinvolgono. Poi un premio, quindi un rinforzo finale, come avviene per esempio in queste grandi case come il mcdonald che fa per esempio l'Happy Meal, il giochino. quello è un rinforzo positivo, per cui dice se compri questo cibo ti verrà dato un gioco, quindi ti verrà dato un compenso, no? Quindi una sorta di compenso come rinforzo positivo e sicuramente delle immagini belle, no? Magari anche associate a qualche personaggio, a qualche a qualche colore particolare.

**Federica:** L'ultima cosa, un'esperienza del tuo lavoro attraverso la quale mi puoi dimostrare una delle cose che hai detto.

**Titti:** allora sicuramente una delle difficoltà più grosse per i bambini è la selettività alimentare, quella che ti ho detto all'inizio. La selettività alimentare purtroppo riguarda tante tipologie di

disturbi, no? Una su tutte è l'autismo, il bambino autistico non avendo relazione, interazione sociale, fa molta fatica. Ad approcciare al nuovo, per cui tutto quello che prima ti dicevo, no? Siccome loro hanno un'alterazione degli organi di senso per cui sentono gli odori in maniera esagerata, i rumori anche i sapori, fanno fatica a conoscere il nuovo no, perché per loro il nuovo è interazione è diciamo fare entrare nella propria mente, nel proprio meccanismo cognitivo altri concetti, no, altri gusti per cui loro sono selettivi. Allora o sono selettivi, per cui mangiano solo determinati cibi e solo determinate consistenze. Un po perché sono selettivi, un po perché hanno delle stereotipie per cui poi è un meccanismo, un ingranaggio che si attiva e loro mangiano, per esempio solo il tenerone a pezzettini e solo quello. Se anche sia un tenerone quello che esce a tre i più piccolini più tondi non lo mangiano perché già ha una forma che a loro non è familiare. Oppure mangiano solo le pennette. Per cui se siano gnocchetti, se siano orecchiette, se siano farfalle no perché vedono già la forma per cui già rifiutano a prescindere. non fanno il passaggio, non vanno oltre. E poi anche perché si fa proprio fatica nel corso della loro vita a dargli proprio degli elementi di novità, loro fanno fatica nei passaggi dell'evoluzione, della vita.

**Federica:** E come avete risolto? Un esempio solo di una risoluzione visiva.

**Titti:** Allora non si risolve completamente, però il bambino si porta a far assaggiare nuove consistenze, nuovi gusti, quasi sempre si parte dalla terapia, no? Quindi il terapeuta propone attraverso prima delle immagini, perché spesso i bambini autistici possono avere, possono essere verbali, ma anche non verbali, per cui come li si aiuta, li si aiuta o con delle APP al tablet o con una comunicazione che si chiama comunicazione Aumentativa alternativa, che è l'associazione proprio di immagini a categorie, quindi si aiuta attraverso le immagini a far entrare nella mente nel bambino e nella consapevolezza del bambino nuove cose, nuova struttura, nuovi elementi o quindi piano piano si propongono le cose. A piccoli passi, cioè facendo piccoli passi. La cosa che bisogna tener presente è che loro, a un certo punto, possono cominciare a fare l'altro passaggio, quello dell'ingurgitare il cibo, a essere voraci, quindi non a non attivare gli altri organi di senso, ma semplicemente ingurgitare del cibo e masticarlo e buttarlo giù. Quindi Sì, le immagini sono fondamentali sia per i normodotati, se proprio vogliamo intendere così, sia per i bambini che hanno delle difficoltà.

**Federica:** Grazie mille per il tuo tempo, per avermi dedicato tutta questa intervista, sei consapevole e dai il tuo consenso per l'utilizzo di queste informazioni?

**Titti:** Sì, Assolutamente sì.

**Federica:** Grazie.

**Titti:** Grazie a te.

TRANSLATION



Federica: Well, good afternoon, I'm Federica Petrella, a marketing student at Luiss Guido Carli and I'm conducting a research project for my thesis focused on the use of cartoonized spokescharacters on restaurant menus as a nudge to promote healthier food choices among children. Today I'm here with Concetta Terracciano, a psychologist working in the Ludopolis center of Acerra, activities aimed at assisting children both in terms of disciplinary education and cognitive psychology with differentiated activities based on the age of the users and their actual needs and requirements. The participant received a series of instructions and guidelines to follow on the topic of my research and I asked her to take photographs or collect images that could respond to the need to understand the effectiveness of the intervention through the expression of thoughts and opinions of her. The figure represents a less modified hypothetical with a generic superhero that I presented to the participants a few days before the interviews, in order to have a clear idea of what they should comment.

Titti: Hi everyone, I'm Concetta Terracciano, I'm a psychologist and today I'm here with Federica to answer your questions.

Federica: Let's start with how many images did you bring? Describe a little bit what's in the pictures?

Titti: So I have developed a thought of how, um, engaging a child can be depending on the images that enter their mind. So compared to, let's say a food path what can affect a child and what not. Children are continually subjected to images and these images are fundamental because children go by association no, because they do, they have activation of a memory called semantic memory. So they activate all the facts, all the information they receive from the external environment, they enter a warehouse and then they come. Recorded and stored and therefore ensure that the child enriches his baggage more and more with all the information he receives. External what it definitely is. More effective for children are the images that reach them because the image remains much more in a child's memory than a sentence, a statement, an explicit saying, therefore a statement. We could actually define them as non-verbal, but we could also define them as images, photographs, information held by children. The important thing is that when a child eats, he doesn't eat only with the sense organ, which tastes but activates all the other sense organs which are obviously the sense of smell, because foods give off smells? They activate their vision, so they see and also perceive the colors of what they eat. And indeed some children. Um, they have a food selectivity in jargon because they prefer only certain foods, perhaps of color, shape, smell, taste, and therefore focus their diet. Only on a certain portion of foods. And instead there are children who are more curious, who are more receptive, so yes. They get involved in everything they see, not in everything they perceive, in everything they hear. I have tried to do a proper job of associating images with sensations and emotions and receptivity in children. The

first image I see is the image of the Mickey Mouse of Ratatouille, the Mickey Mouse of Ratatouille. As everyone knows, he is a chef and discovers that he has this passion and therefore secretly sneaks into the kitchen of a well-known restaurant and even the culinary critic praises him.

Obviously it is set in Paris, so in this film you can see all the classic foods of the kitchen, let's say French, but what comes to mind most is definitely the vegetable ratatouille, obviously composed of sliced vegetables that are prepared in a tray arranged in a radial pattern. And it's hard for a child to want to taste vegetables, right? That is, children always resist tasting vegetables, but it also happened to me with my children, that is, my children who saw ratatouille and who wanted not only to prepare it, but actually to taste it. And there are courgettes, there may be potatoes, tomatoes and So there is also a closeness, a child's approach to even healthy food, so the cartoon isn't always synonymous with negativity, right? That is, a negative approach to food, in this case it has a positive approach because not even us adults, already when you only see the positioning of the vegetables, the colors of these vegetables and perhaps the smoke, no, this is the result of the vision they emanate in association impulse to the brain that makes you salivate a bit as happens in Pavlov's cognitive behavioral theory with dog salivation, i.e. practically does Pavlov do this experiment? he puts the dog's food in its container and then puts it from a distance, no, and He understands that at the mere sight of the food that the dog likes, the dog salivates, therefore salivation is activated at the mere sight. so let's say that ratatouille is a positive image. Go on. the second image is that of lady and the tramp. No, of this beautiful plate of spaghetti with meatballs and let's say that here there is less involvement, in the sense that children already like tomato sauce, therefore a food that is generally presented to children from when they are small, not the tomato and therefore they have no difficulty because the taste is sweet, intense, so they are used to spaghetti are let's say a very Italian food because we use them in our kitchen and meatballs are things that children are given no, that is, even when they are small for a second course, so they don't find it difficult to approach this type of food, but they are certainly more enticing, because already the sight of these two chubby little dogs who have fallen in love, who share this food, almost makes you want to eat it, so there's always a propensity to not just seeing it, so let's see how much taste isn't involved yet and salivation is already activated and therefore the desire to eat this dish. Let's move on to the third image and we don't move away from the meatballs, no, there's this film called "it's raining meatballs" where it doesn't rain meatballs but it rains food of all kinds and the mere thought, i.e. children are fascinated by the mere thought that this food rains from above no, almost like rain and the quantity of food and the way it is proposed, no, color, shape, modality, the wonder in the eyes of these protagonists makes you want to eat no, it happened to me often that my children ask me for food after they have seen the cartoon almost

as a way of approaching curiosity. if they have already experienced it, as in the case of meatballs, they ask me those meatballs, that is, that kind of meatball, no? Almost as if to say, I've always eaten meatballs, but I want those meatballs because they make me want to eat them. Maybe they will be different, OK? If they haven't really tasted it, as in the case of other films such as other cartoons such as Ratatouille, they want to taste that food so it is important in this, in this case, that whoever produces cartoons or who creates them and who has the idea generates a cartoon that encourages children to eat healthy food. go on.

Federica: eh it must rain fennel.

Titti: This is a really sweet picture. Eh metaphorically, it doesn't push me away, it's the image of Winnie The Pooh eating his honey. I chose this image, I describe it because in this case Winnie has a hat and very smiling he also put on a bib, he has a beautiful bowl of honey and with great enthusiasm he is preparing to eat it. No, so for a child who has never tasted honey or who doesn't like honey because he's used to sugar, oh well, in this case let's open parentheses, refined sugar isn't so good, instead honey does, it could be tempted to taste honey and then perhaps add it to milk in the morning or add it to a fruit salad rather than a yoghurt, no or even on bread, no on bread instead of bread and jam which, in any case, is also healthy. Honey, precisely because the image can be associated with winnie no and with the pleasure that winnie feels in eating honey.

Federica: So, let's say by emulation?

Titti: by imitation. Who among us hasn't grown up on spinach? Arm wrestling, spinach, muscles become strong, ingest spinach and immediately, gain strength. all these kids who have let's say superheroes as a point of. Reference, strength, muscles, great feats, climbing buildings like Spider-Man does for example, having arm wrestling which is true that a slightly older cartoon, but still remains in the history of the cartoon and in the Spinach association, not that. In short, it is important that he can be given glory again, arm wrestling again precisely for this reason. I remember when I was little, there were even chewing gum in the shape of spinach, precisely because, in short, there was arm wrestling going there. And spinach is essential for children because in combination, for example with lemon no OK, spinach with lemon is also a very important source of vitamin C, isn't it? Together the Association itself, so even for example, I feel like a spinach omelette, right? Children are encouraged to eat it. The other image is a little less healthy, but it is in the memory of all of us. They are the famous doraemon dorayaki. No, oh well, let's say they're pancakes with chocolate cream inside and they're actually not much. Healthy, but if we think of pancakes that we eat no even in the morning today, then many nutritionists recommend eating pancakes, right? Therefore, they use for example protein diets, so it's not really a complete junk food because if done in the right way, perhaps with a maple syrup, perhaps with honey and fruit Presented in the morning for breakfast it can be a even healthy food, so use the

tool, then use doraemon as a vehicle to get children and transform food into healthy food even a food that maybe apparently can't be. I speak fast. Okay. One last image that I don't have, but which comes to mind is the Teen Titans go cartoon which is a cartoon that my children watch and which however I make a negative association in this case because AND there is a lot of science fiction, i.e. there's a lot of departure from reality, because they eat this food that doesn't have a specific texture, that doesn't have a specific identity, that you don't understand, it's oriental rather than western. But the key thing is that you eat it in a voracious way, right? That is, they take this food yes, this food almost by swallowing. No, but not giving A sense, instead the food must be savored because, as I said before it must be eaten with all the sense organs, it must be smelled, it must be seen, it must be looked at and therefore an identity must be given to the food in such a way that it remains in the memory of children.

Ah instead Francesco being older, went through the era of Walt Disney cartoons so he went through this era in which all these cartoons told stories and food was a vehicle, a way to meet, an involvement, a way to give yourself a time, a situation, as in the case of Lady and the Tramp, sharing. so it's all related.

Federica: So Of all the images, take all the images you brought me, group them, even if you already did a little bit while you were talking, group them by subject or by utility, and let's make groups of as many groups as you want, you can manage.

Titti: Okay. Then the first group is healthy food. So I would put ratatouille, spaghetti. Arm wrestling spinach, raining meatballs and Winnie de Pooh honey. I would just leave out the doraemon dorayaki.

Federica: Mhm sure we don't want to divide this further?

Titti: And in what way is it? maybe vegetables, so spinach and ratatouille, pasta and meatballs?

Federica: We'll leave the honey here instead. what do we call this category, i.e. what does it represent?

Titti: Comfort food is actually dorayaki, even if, as I said before, it can be used. The transformation and of course the children aren't completely denied dessert, right? What's important is not to give it to him all the time, so. Maybe give it to him, in short, in a limited way. And then, if possible, completely deconstruct all the sweets, but perhaps make them pass it off as a breakfast, no, rather than as a heavy snack, therefore a breakfast, perhaps with a pancake with fruit, therefore also associating some fruit that is healthy and perhaps with some honey. So we could also make dorayaki associations with honey, maybe sweet foods we could also make this other association.

Federica: Ehh. In fact, in fact, the next thing I ask you is to bring together those who are then among these three groups, those who are more similar to each other,

Titti: Ok dorayaki and honey because it's sweet. Vegetables, as I told you before, so spinach. And instead then the spaghetti that pasta with meatballs.

Federica: For the purposes of my research, therefore of effectiveness, put me in order really a ranking of what are the main things, perhaps the main strategies that you told me about these here, these groups? What to use, what can I do first? Then, less importantly, more important things, maybe we can also start from the most important image and then we associate. What do you think is the most representative in your opinion? what is the activity that you think could be useful to me for the menu?

Titti: So the first thing, and that is I believe that the most representative image is that of Winnie the Pooh, because first of all the rule and the behavior stand out, that is the rule, sitting at the table the rule is the behavior, that is keeping a appropriate behavior at the table and therefore this can help children both at home and in external contexts, therefore such as restaurants, pizzerias and so on, because what happens now that the child is placed in front of a tablet or a telephone to sit at the table. Instead, perhaps using this appropriate behavior already from home, already through the images, the cartoons he is subjected to, he can give some help. Also Because at the table you have to be there, as I said before, with the other sense organs and with the pleasure of being there, so seeing this image is really having the pleasure of eating a specific food with the rule, therefore with the gag for not get the right cutlery dirty, to be able to do it sitting composed and then approach a food you like, but doing it with a rule. So I think this is the most appropriate image,

Titti: then I imagine that it also serves to choose the salad rather than the thing not to say hello if you already have rules

Titti: yes, in short, you have less effort because paradoxically the rule for the child is not a negative thing or it is hard to give it to him. Kids need rules, OK, because rules for kids are like the banks of a river. If there are no banks, the river will overflow, so if we don't give rules, the child will go freewheeling and begin to activate a whole series of dysfunctional behaviors, because he doesn't know how to behave, not because he doesn't want to, or doesn't agree to do it, then if one begins to give him rules the child will then go automatically because that is his reality and that will become his reality because he consolidates it and makes it his own.

Federica: OK, but the least important, least representative of all the images?

Titti: That of doraemon, because in short Of food in quotes junk or that it would be right to limit to children if you already see a lot, so the less you present it to them the better.

Federica: But how would you imagine a menu that instead does the opposite of what I want to do, that is, it doesn't attract children at all and children aren't really attracted to it?

Titti: definitely vegetables that have a strange consistency, therefore, in sight vegetables that have an unpleasant smell.

Federica: But I always say from a Charter point of view.

Titti: Ok, have children always as soon as they feel cabbage cauliflower activate these sensations? No because? Because cabbage has an unpleasant smell, although it tastes good. Then as adults we appreciate their qualities. But it has an unpleasant pain and a really weird texture. So if he reads cabbage, it's already active, no, because it goes into association, and certainly a large pasta, right? A very large type of pasta, so the child struggles to grasp, struggles to eat.

Federica: ah you say You really say images on the menu.

Titti: Yes, children do, because children are bored, often bored with eating, because they are so curious that they are attracted to something else, so hardly. They've eaten a little. So they're already a little full. They don't keep eating because maybe I know. At the restaurant there are carousels outside rather than the music that attracts them, rather than a child who wants to play with them, so to keep them at the table there must certainly be images that involve them. Then a prize, then a final reinforcement, as happens for example in these big houses like McDonald's which makes, for example, the Happy Meal, the little game. that's positive reinforcement, so he says if you buy this food you'll be given a game, so you'll be given a fee, right? So some kind of compensation as a positive reinforcement and certainly some beautiful images, right? Maybe even associated with some character, some with some particular color.

Federica: Lastly, an experience of your work through which you can demonstrate one of the things you said.

Titti: then certainly one of the biggest difficulties for children is food selectivity, the one I told you at the beginning. Food selectivity unfortunately concerns many types of disorders, right? One above all is autism, the autistic child having no relationship, social interaction, has a lot of difficulty. To approach the new, so everything I was telling you before, right? Since they have an alteration of the sense organs for which they perceive smells in an exaggerated way, noises even tastes, they find it difficult to know the new no, because for them the new is interaction and let's say letting it enter their own mind, their own cognitive mechanism other concepts, no, other tastes for which they are selective. Then either they are selective, so they only eat certain foods and only certain textures. Partly because they are selective, partly because they have stereotypies for which it is then a mechanism, a gear that activates and they eat, for example only the softie in small pieces and only that. Even if it's a softie that comes out in threes, the rounder little ones don't eat it because it already has a shape that isn't familiar to them. Or they only eat the pennette. So if they are dumplings, orecchiette, butterflies, no because they already see the shape so they already refuse regardless. they do not make the transition, they go no further. And then also because it's really hard during their life to give them new elements, they have a hard time in the passages of evolution, of life.

Federica: And how did you solve it? An example of a visual resolution only.

Titti: So it doesn't resolve completely, but the child takes himself to be tasted new consistencies, new tastes, almost always we start from therapy, right? Then the therapist first proposes images, because often autistic children can have, they can be verbal, but also non-verbal, so how do you help them, do you help them either with APPs on the tablet or with a communication called communication Alternative augmentative, which is the association of images to categories, therefore it helps through images to bring new things, new structures, new elements into the child's mind and awareness, or so things are gradually proposed. In small steps, that is, taking small steps. The thing that must be kept in mind is that at a certain point they can begin to make the other passage, that of swallowing food, to be voracious, therefore not to not activate the other sense organs, but simply to swallow food. food and chew it and throw it down. So Yes, the images are essential both for the able-bodied, if we really want to understand it that way, and for children who have difficulties.

Federica: Thank you very much for your time, for dedicating this entire interview to me, are you aware and do you give your consent for the use of this information?

Titti: Yes, absolutely yes.

Federica: Thank you.

Titti: Thank you.

## **SERENA**

**Federica:** Buongiorno a tutti, sono Federica Petrella, studentessa di marketing alla Luiss Guido Carli e sto conducendo un progetto di ricerca per la mia tesi incentrato sull'utilizzo degli SpokesCharacters o portavoce cartoonizzati sui menù dei ristoranti come nudge per promuovere scelte alimentari più salutari tra i bambini. Oggi sono qui con Serena Picardi, che ha ricevuto una serie di istruzioni e di linee guida da seguire sul topic della mia ricerca; le ho chiesto di fare delle fotografie o raccogliere delle immagini che potessero rispondere alla mia esigenza di comprendere l'efficacia dell'intervento attraverso l'espressione dei suoi pensieri ed Opinioni. La figura rappresenta l'ipotetico menu modificato con un supereroe generico che ho presentato qualche giorno prima dell'intervista, al fine di avere un'idea chiara di ciò che avrebbero dovuto commentare. Presentati serena.

**Serena:** Buongiorno, sono Picardi Serena, sono laureata in sociologia e ho studiato nel corso dei miei studi psicologia sociale, ma anche nella vita quotidiana ho avuto diversi approcci coi bambini, partendo dal capo scout che ho fatto per un anno stesso qui nella mia città e poi i servizi di animazione.

**Federica:** Ok, allora iniziamo, quante immagini mi hai portato?

**Serena:** 8

**Federica:** OK descrivimi ogni immagine che hai portato, cosa vedi all'interno e perché?

**Serena:** Sì, allora parto innanzitutto col dare la risposta alla domanda che mi è stata posta da Federica, cioè, credi, appunto che le immagini dei cartoni sui menù portino ad una scelta più sana da parte di bambini. La mia risposta è sì, ovviamente argomenterò nel corso dell'intervista. Ma sì, perché credo che comunque un bambino, soprattutto quando è piccolo, si identifica nei cartoni che guarda e soprattutto ultimamente c'è la mania della Marvel, dei supereroi. Quindi credo che i bambini, comunque, in un modo o nell'altro si sentano raffigurati e quindi sapere magari che sul menù c'è quel tipo di supereroe piuttosto che un altro - questa è una delle foto, infatti, che ho portato - Sicuramente fa sì che il bambino scelga quello. Ho portato la foto di Superman, in realtà vabbè, Superman spiderman un po' tutti. Vabbè, Superman credo sia della DC, ma comunque DC Marvel, stiamo lì. Penso che, magari non so, una scritta con il "menù del Supereroe" con Superman accanto, credo sia più diciamo, cioè incida maggiormente piuttosto che un supereroe generico.

**Federica:** Ah OK quindi Più uno popolare che un supereroe generico.

**Serena:** Sì, anche perché ci sono tantissimi cartoni. Però credo che infatti nella scelta delle mie immagini ho scelto quasi tutti i cartoni, bene o male, molto famosi e non a caso. Insomma, ehm un'altra idea che ho avuto è proprio sul come rendere più appetibile un tipo di menù piuttosto che un altro e ad esempio "giocare" con i cartoni. io, fan di spongebob da quando ero piccola praticamente mi è venuta in mente la trama di spongebob, che lui cerca sempre questo ingrediente di questo panino e ho pensato che quindi magari scegliere un determinato ingrediente del panino e fingere magari che questo ingrediente sia un tipo di verdura rende il panino più appetibile per il bambino, perché ha scoperto finalmente questo segreto che c'era nel cartone. Questa può essere una banalità, ma secondo me è una cosa che può invogliare un bambino a mangiare di più quel prodotto. Un'altra cosa, in realtà che ho cercato vagando su Internet riguardo al tema, è più per le femminucce perché è praticamente il panino di Barbie ed una è un'iniziativa che è stata fatta al Nord non ricordo bene la città, ma praticamente un panino vegetale, quindi fatto solo con ingredienti vegetali, in cui praticamente c'è stato messo nel pane un ingrediente particolare, una barbabetola se non erro. Vabbè, comunque, per farlo diventare rosa e ci sono tutti ingredienti bio, insomma, tra cui verdure, insalata eccetera e anche l'hamburger di per sé è vegetale e quindi ho pensato che l'hamburger di Barbie già l'aspetto, tutto rosa eccetera potrebbe invogliare magari una bimba a mangiarlo piuttosto che ad un bambino, magari. Infatti questo poi è un altro tema, cioè la differenza di genere, perché ovviamente i bambini sin da piccoli guardano cartoni differenti. magari le bambine guardano le Winx, Barbie oppure quando guardano Topolino si



concentrano magari sull'immagine di minnie piuttosto che su quella di Topolino e viceversa per i maschi. E quindi un'immagine che ho portato è quella proprio raffigurante Topolino e minnie. ho voluto portare questo spunto di riflessione per dire che comunque, se sul menù è raffigurata magari minnie piuttosto che Topolino può incidere maggiormente su una bambina piuttosto che su un bambino.

**Federica:** E se invece li mettessi Entrambi?

**Serena:** Beh, se li mettessi entrambi secondo me non inciderebbero tanto nel senso che il cartone di Topolino è incentrato su Topolino, cioè ne “la casa di Topolino” non viene citata minnie, cioè, quindi credo che un bambino che guardi Topolino sia fan di Topolino, minnie tutti gli altri personaggi sono da contorno, questo fa anche un po riflettere, ma vabbe. E quindi penso che minnie sia maggiormente percepita “come vicina” dalle bimbe piuttosto che dai bambini, cioè i bambini poi soprattutto quando sono piccoli, non credo che abbiano il senso del romanticismo.

**Federica:** Io pensavo più, per esempio metterli entrambi anche se non abbracciati, per dire, per prendere sia i maschi, cioè quello intendevo

**Serena:** Ah sì, forse sì. Però sì, sì, vabbè, ovviamente, perché sennò dovrebbero avere menù diversi da dare alle bambine. Le bambine, però questo potrebbe essere una cosa da fare anche perché ripeto, se hanno nel menu un oppure mettere entrambi, cioè magari mettere entrambi però separati a mio parere. non so perché ma sono convinta che separati abbiano più impatto. Poi magari non è così.

Poi un'altra ah, questa qua, ratatouille, chi non l'ha visto? spero che tu l'abbia visto perché è stupendo e quindi anche questo mi è venuto in mente, con protagonista un topolino chef. Ratatouille non è il nome del topo, ma è proprio il piatto che lui cucina, fatto praticamente di verdure, cioè sono tutte verdure e quindi ho pensato che magari vendere una combo di verdure questo forse ai bambini un po più grandi, magari che ne so sui 10 anni. Che capiscono maggiormente che un bambino di 4 magari se ne intende di meno. Però un bambino di 10 anni che sa che magari quel piatto è stato fatto da questo iconico Topolino del cartone, secondo me può, può potrebbe invogliare a mangiare. ecco un'altra foto che ho portato riguarda proprio la differenza d'età. Nvabbè no, però è uno spunto di riflessione perché ovviamente a 10 anni guardi i cartoni diversi rispetto a un bambino di 5 anni e soprattutto capisci meno, cioè quindi magari si potrebbe giostrare maggiormente su un menu secondo me fatto anche un po a mo' di gioco. cioè per esempio magari presentare un menù da colorare oppure magari ecco con cartoni sì, ma magari da colorare oppure un menù per esempio come questo in cui praticamente c'è tutto colorato, con poche scritte, con anche questi, per esempio, sono cartoni generici, però secondo me visibilmente sono più “approcciabili” dai bambini.

**Federica:** Quindi diciamo che in questo caso un cartone generico associato a un concetto di gioco, potrebbe funzionare.

**Serena:** Sì, sì. e quindi ovviamente quindi andare a vedere pure la differenza di età nei bambini, però ovviamente mi rendo conto che un ristorante non può badare a tutte queste cose, però magari fare una tipologia di menù per una fascia d'età più piccola e una più grande secondo me può incidere anche perché ci sono anche molti pub, per esempio con iniziative del tipo panini a tema, non so se hai mai visto, oppure proprio locali con zone a tema, cioè che ne so Harry Potter da un lato la roba della Marvel, dall'altro.

**Federica:** cioè quindi tu scegli dove andare?

**Serena:** Sì e quindi magari se tu sei fan della Marvel vai lì e ci sono tutti i piatti che hanno un nome specifico, che comunque fa parte di quel film o quella tipologia di film. Ora qua è film, però secondo me anche coi cartoni, per esempio, c'è pure un locale con I Simpson. In realtà I Simpson sono un po meno educativi, però, Eh, secondo me fare anche un locale a tema oltre al menù.

**Federica:** Sì, però tu potresti effettivamente, come hai detto tu, mettere un angolo che si chiama Simpson, però in realtà tu vai là solo perché sono I Simpson, ma ti mangi una cosa che ti portano, che scelgono loro. Magari fatto di verdure

**Serena:** Esatto, esattamente. Poi, ah ho portato la foto di braccio di ferro perché vabbè, iconico io lo guardavo sempre perché mi ricordo che anche quando ero piccola sapere che questo braccio di ferro mangiasse questi spinaci per essere più forte mi ha sempre incuriosito. Poi ho letto anche un po la storia perché ho pensato, cioè chissà se è vera questa cosa? Se l'hanno fatta apposta per invogliare i bambini a mangiare gli spinaci, essendo un cartone. In realtà sì, tipo dopo la dopo la Seconda guerra mondiale ci fu una carenza di ferro, una cosa del genere e comunque per invogliare i bambini a mangiare fu l'iniziativa di una casa farmaceutica. Anche se in realtà questo cartone, cioè poi dopo la cosa del ferro, cioè degli spinaci che contengono molto ferro, è stata anche un po Eh, diciamo persa

**Federica:** però, quindi questo tema è importante anche per il contesto sociopolitico e culturale.

**Serena:** Sì, è stata è stato fatto apposta e quindi Penso che comunque questo sia proprio una cosa importante, cioè il fatto di associare a un cartone animato. in realtà oggi giorno si fa molto, ci sono cartoni che vabbè sono fatti solo per il mero divertimento tipo Simpson, magari anche un po. Troppo, cioè per i bambini un po più grandi. E invece altri cartoni, per esempio questo che secondo me aiutano ad associare una cosa positiva, ma che sia il mangiare gli spinaci, ma che sia qualsiasi cosa per aiutare l'altro, eccetera, ormai i cartoni sono cioè sono improntati molto su questo. Lo dico per esperienza, perché ho un fratellino piccolo che quando era piccolo era fissato con questo cartone in cui erano tutti tipo dei supereroi con poteri particolari, tipo che aiutavano

gli altri eccetera quindi lui, diciamo prendeva questi cartoni come punto di riferimento per fare buone azioni. Secondo me è importante, poi pure per l'alimentazione. Ah. Poi un'altra cosa che ho scoperto in realtà da molto grande, cioè che i personaggi di Dragon Ball vabbè, Dragon Ball ormai famosissimo, tutti, cioè noi, classe 99 lo vedevamo quindi figurati adesso, praticamente alcuni hanno i nomi di vegetali.

**Federica:** ma che dici? Perciò vegeta

**Serena:** Te lo giuro. Esatto, esatto, vegeta significa vegetale, oppure kakarot significa carota. Radish, Radicchio. Nap è un tipo di cavolo, per dirne alcuni. Secondo me non è stato fatto a caso, cioè nel senso magari questo può fungere un po di più con i bambini giapponesi. Però, per dire, cioè non è una cosa da ignorare. Ecco magari associare in un menu dove c'è una carota e chiamarlo kakarot per dire una stupidaggine, che è appunto un membro di un personaggio di Dragon Ball potrebbe secondo me invogliare un bambino a mangiare di più quel prodotto.

Un'altra idea che mi è venuta in mente è invece, per esempio qua ci sono i Pokemon ma in realtà per qualsiasi cartone, cioè come fanno al McDonald's danno il menù per bambini, l'happy meal con la sorpresa dentro che invoglia di più il bambino a mangiare. In questo caso, ovviamente, siamo di fronte ad un cibo spazzatura, però secondo me, se si facesse una cosa del genere anche in un ristorante dove magari c'è il menù da scoprire, cioè quindi anche il fatto che non sia portato il piatto così, ma anche proprio da aprire, come se fosse una sorta di sorpresa, inciderebbe di più sulla percezione che quel menù sia buono e poi soprattutto magari premiare il bambino con un giocattolo come fanno al Mc. molto spesso io vedo anche persone adulte che si prendono l'happy meal per la sorpresa, dato che molto spesso fanno anche collaborazioni con la Marvel, eccetera. E quindi secondo me un bambino prende l'happy meal non per il panino, perché alla fine è la stessa cosa, ma per la sorpresa sicuramente. Ah poi un'altra cosa vabbè, qua c'è un'immagine di my Little pony ma in realtà per qualsiasi cosa, infatti c'è pure una di Nemo. Ho trovato questa storia online di questo papà in america che praticamente cucinava ai suoi figli per andare a scuola e preparava ogni giorno per loro quando vanno a scuola questi piatti super decorati, cioè proprio lavorati con l'immagine di my Little pony oppure con le immagini di Nemo e se notiamo sono comunque cose salutari, questa è pasta, questi sono lamponi, una foglia di insalata, ecc. Quindi secondo me questo cioè portare un menù non solo magari raffigurando proprio sul menu appunto un tipo di cartone, ma anche farlo proprio a mo di piatto secondo me invoglierebbe tanto a mangiare.

**Federica:** Sì, ma magari proprio per far vedere come arriverà il piatto così fare un disegno sul menù, così uno già sa cosa arriverà.

**Serena:** Possibilmente uguale, perché alcune volte le immagini sono storpiate. Poi ho portato questa qua di Winnie the pooh e tigre, che praticamente mangiano questo Sandwich con

insalata, pomodori e quindi ho pensato che secondo me pure questo magari metterlo in un tipo di immagini su un menu colorato, come ho detto prima eccetera, cartone famosissimo, magari che mangiano questo Sandwich con insalata eccetera che è molto visibile, perciò l'ho screenato, perché cioè si vedeva proprio. Sì, secondo me anche questo potrebbe incidere.

**Federica:** Ah, quindi potrebbe essere utile secondo te mettere il personaggio che mangia qualcosa di salutare?

**Serena:** Sì Esatto, è proprio questo il concetto, perché magari vedendo il personaggio mangiare quel tipo di cosa il bambino dice "allora lo mangerò anch'io", se lo mangia magari Winnie the Pooh per dire lo mangerò anch'io e questa è una cosa che ho riscontrato in realtà anche in dei video-cartoni, cioè facevano proprio vedere quel personaggio che per invogliare i bambini a mangiare ad esempio le verdure mangiava i broccoli e perché un suo eroe mangiava i broccoli.

Poi ho portato questo per esempio tutto colorato. Magari potrebbe essere anche in bianco e nero, fornire magari dei colori e far colorare ai bambini nell'attesa, per dire anche questo, magari questo pure per i bambini, un. Po più piccoli Sempre collegato al concetto sia di gioco sia di personaggi.

**Federica:** va bene, Chiarissimo, poi adesso. In realtà questo già me l'hai detto prima, mi ricordo che c'era un'immagine che mi volevi portare che però non hai screenato qual era?

**Serena:** Sì, sì, era un'immagine praticamente sulla differenza di età tra bambini che poteva aiutarmi nel discorso. Nell'immagine erano raffigurati un bambino piccolo e uno grande, proprio per parlare del concetto dell'età, comunque un cartone, magari può essere più conosciuto da un bambino di 10 piuttosto che 5 anni.

**Serena:** Adesso prendi tutte le immagini che hai, dividiamole in gruppi mettendole in relazione fra loro, quelle che hanno un significato, una variabile o un motivo comune

**Serena:** Ok. Allora le foto che ho messo insieme sono quella di spongebob, di ratatouille, di Winnie the Pooh e braccio di ferro, perché vabbè, in tutte quante sono raffigurati dei piatti e anche perché comunque in base al concetto del far vedere cosa mangia quel tipo di cartone.

**Federica:** Anche questa cosa che stanno mangiando, come possiamo dirlo in una parola, emulazione? Dare l'esempio?

**Serena:** Sì, esatto.

**Federica:** Ok, allora la prossima.

**Serena:** Allora altre foto, ah vabbè, quella di Dragon Ball insieme a Superman, minnie e Topolino. Le metterei insieme perché comunque raffigurano dei personaggi che col semplice fatto di essere famosi possono incidere di più nel mangiare un tipo di cosa, anche salutare, perché comunque prendi goku, per esempio, è famosissimo oppure Superman e stessa cosa mi è Topolino. Invece un'altra foto che lascerei proprio da sola. È quella del menu fatto a modo di Happy meal con la sorpresa all'interno perché ha delle variabili in comuni si un comune

sicuramente col concetto di gioco di scoperta, però è una cosa a sé, perché comunque presentare il menu proprio in questo modo cambia tutto.

Poi praticamente tutti tipi di menù, cioè quindi due menù colorati che ho fatto vedere e anche i tipi di piatti insieme, per esempio l'hamburger di Barbie e le due cose di Nemo e my Little pony, cioè i due menù fatti già, perché comunque ecco, anche in questo caso si punta un po' sull'estetica del piatto, quindi sull'hamburger di Barbie tutto rosa, myLittle pony con proprio disegnato il pony e Nemo. Stessa cosa, quindi **l'estetica**. e poi invece vabbè, questo forse sono due gruppi separati, non lo so.

**Federica:** Non li hai messi già insieme?

**Serena:** Eh sì, sì li ho messi insieme, vabbè menù ovviamente, perché sì, anche qua si punta sull'estetica. Quindi sì, perché alla fine l'estetica tutto colorato e anche sul concetto di gioco, cioè magari un menù in questo caso è già colorato. Però se fosse bianco e nero vorrebbe magari...

Federica: Facciamo così, i piatti colorati sono e anche quello di Barbie sono dell'estetica, E invece i menù colorati possono essere concetto di gioco. OK, abbiamo sti quattro gruppi. Ok, adesso selezioniamo una, due o più pile tra queste che abbiamo creato e mettiamo insieme quelli che sono simili fra loro e quelli invece che non c'azzeccano niente fra loro? Tu a volte hai avuto il dubbio se metterli insieme oppure no. quindi abbiamo detto che uno è disegni di piatti, cioè proprio del cibo, devo dire di cibo ed esempio: gruppo uno. Poi un'altro è gioco. Un'altro, l'estetica. Poi riconoscimento dei personaggi famosi. OK, di questi 5 quali sono quelli assimilabili?

**Serena:** Allora disegni di cibo ed estetica, perché portare magari il menu con raffigurato my Little pony e mettere sul menu magari un my Little pony da colorare per dire, secondo me si può essere. Una combo. E poi riconoscimento personaggi famosi, lo metterei a sé. Anche packaging ed happy meal io li metterei a sé

**Federica:** Adesso ordiniamo per importanza per la mia tesi queste strategie, dalla più importante alla meno importante. Allora qua non c'è bisogno di un motivo

**Serena:** il packaging al primo posto, gioco ed estetica insieme al secondo, personaggi famosi al terzo e disegni di cibo al quarto. Secondo me il packaging è proprio la prima cosa, perché il fatto di appunto avere una sorpresa all'interno è tutto sì. Secondo me incide molto.

**Federica:** E quindi adesso prendi tutte le immagini che mi hai portato, trovami quella più rappresentative, più importante per me, per i miei biettivi e quella meno rappresentativa.

**Serena:** Beh, in base anche a quello che ho detto adesso la più rappresentativa credo sia quella là appunto del packaging. Quindi questa qua dei Pokemon con Happy meal, quella meno rappresentativa direi quella là di Winnie the Pooh

**Federica:** Adesso se ci riesci, attribuisce ogni immagine, ai 5 sensi un'immagine oppure ad un concetto Che mi hai portato?

**Serena:** Gusto sto io metterei proprio questa di winnie the pooh, perché potrebbe far venire l'acquolina vedere proprio già la figura del panino. E vabbè, stessa cosa, se magari sul menù è raffigurato questo tipo di menù di my Little pony o questo di Nemo o ancora il Barbie Burger. olfatto, mah, diciamo Ratatouille, magari perché comunque hai uno chef, quindi in cucina magari. tatto forse, l'happy meal, il package, la sorpresa pure, quindi sì. E poi Vista secondo me Superman; Non lo so se c'è uno studio che attesta questa cosa, mi informerò, ma i colori di come è vestito Superman secondo me sono hanno un senso, sì, il rosso e il giallo, che Poi alla fine sono anche quelli un po' del McDonald's, quindi forse sì.

**Federica:** Il Blu sicuramente, anche tipo su Facebook la gente viene attirata dal colore.

**Serena:** Esatto, attira molto, quindi io direi superman e anche forse un po' Dragon Ball, perché comunque sono tutti colorati, iper-colorati, anche i capelli, magari di colori, che ne so azzurro, quindi sì

**Federica:** OK. Infine, suono.

**Serena:** Qualcosa che può richiamare il suono...Ma lo sai, forse nulla?

**Federica:** Ok, tiriamo le somme dell'intervista e in conclusione è efficace oppure no l'utilizzo di questi personaggi, secondo te?

**Serena:** Sì, secondo me tantissimo, perché come ho detto all'inizio, i bambini si sentono tanto raffigurati, soprattutto in età, cioè quando sono piccolini, magari prima di 10 anni sono più influenzabili, quindi vedere i cartoni e anche vedere i cartoni sui menu può incidere tanto. anche se in realtà una cosa che ho pensato è che al giorno d'oggi i bambini non so se guardano tanto i cartoni, cioè visto che siamo nell'era dei social network, penso che li guardino meno. mi capita più spesso di vedere un bambino col telefono in mano piuttosto che un bambino magari che guarda i cartoni però in realtà mi è anche capitato purtroppo dico purtroppo perché era un po' fastidioso stare per esempio in una pizzeria e vedere magari una mamma che non ce la faceva più di sentire il bimbo piangere, prendeva il tablet e lo metteva davanti col cartone animato e il bambino attratto dal cartone si tranquillizza. Quindi sì, secondo me i cartoni non passeranno mai di moda e soprattutto vederli raffigurati su un menu secondo me incide tanto.

**Federica:** Ultima cosa, se dovessi immaginare un menù proprio anti-bambino come lo vedresti?

**Serena:** Lo vedrei senza colori, quindi bianco e nero, con le scritte magari piccole o magari anche un po' i caratteri difficili da leggere, sai quei caratteri particolari che potrebbero essere eleganti per un adulto, ma magari un bambino che o magari non sa leggere o ancora meglio sa leggere da poco sarebbe meno attirato. e poi vabbè senza immagini, cioè proprio bianco e nero, semplice, triste.

**Federica:** Okay serena grazie mille, sei consapevole e dai il tuo consenso all'utilizzo di queste informazioni che mi hai dato oggi?

**Serena:** sì, ovvio sì.

#### TRANSLATION

Federica: Hello everyone, I'm Federica Petrella, a marketing student at Luiss Guido Carli and I'm conducting a research project for my thesis focused on the use of SpokesCharacters or cartoonized spokespersons on restaurant menus as a nudge to promote healthier food choices among the children. Today I'm here with Serena Picardi, who has received a series of instructions and guidelines to follow on the topic of my research; I asked her to take photographs or collect images that could respond to my need to understand the effectiveness of the intervention through the expression of her thoughts and opinions. The figure represents the hypothetical modified menu with a generic superhero that I presented a few days before the interview, in order to have a clear idea of what they should have commented. Introduce yourself serene.

Serena: Hello, I'm Picardi Serena, I have a degree in sociology and during my studies I studied social psychology, but also in my daily life I had different approaches with children, starting from the scout leader that I did for a year here in my city and then the entertainment services.

Federica: Ok, so let's start, how many pictures did you bring me?

Serene: 8

Federica: OK, describe to me each image you brought, what do you see inside and why?

Serena: Yes, then I'll start first of all by giving the answer to the question Federica asked me, that is, do you think, precisely that the images of the cartoons on the menus lead to a healthier choice on the part of children. My answer is yes, of course I will argue during the interview. But yes, because I believe that in any case a child, especially when he is small, identifies with the cartoons he watches and especially lately there is the mania for Marvel, for superheroes. So I think that children, however, in one way or another feel represented and therefore know maybe that on the menu there is that type of superhero rather than another - this is one of the photos, in fact, that I brought - Definitely makes the child choose the one. I brought the photo of Superman, actually oh well, Superman spiderman a bit all. Oh well, Superman I think is from DC, but still DC Marvel, we're there. I think that, maybe I don't know, a writing with the "Superhero menu" with Superman next to it, I think it's more let's say, that is, it affects more rather than a generic superhero.

Federica: Ah OK so More a popular one than a generic superhero.

Serena: Yes, also because there are so many cartoons. But I believe that in fact in choosing my images I have chosen almost all the cartoons, good or bad, very famous and not by chance. In short, um, another idea I had was precisely how to make one type of menu more attractive than another and, for example, "play" with cartoons. me, a fan of spongebob since i was little, basically

the plot of spongebob came to my mind, that he always looks for this ingredient of this sandwich and i thought that so maybe choose a certain ingredient of the sandwich and maybe pretend that this ingredient is a type of vegetables makes the sandwich more palatable for the child, because he has finally discovered this secret that was in the carton. This may be trivial, but in my opinion it is something that can make a child want to eat that product more. Another thing, which I actually searched for on the Internet on the subject, is more for girls because it's practically Barbie's sandwich and one is an initiative that was carried out in the North, I don't remember the city well, but practically a vegetable sandwich, therefore made only with vegetable ingredients, in which a particular ingredient has practically been put in the bread, a beetroot if I am not mistaken. Oh well, anyway, to make it pink and there are all organic ingredients, in short, including vegetables, salad and so on and even the hamburger itself is vegetable and so I thought that Barbie's hamburger already looks like it, all pink etcetera could perhaps entice a little girl to eat it rather than a boy, perhaps. In fact this is another theme, that is the gender difference, because obviously children from an early age watch different cartoons. maybe the girls look at the Winx, Barbie or when they look at Mickey Mouse they perhaps focus on the image of Minnie rather than that of Mickey Mouse and vice versa for boys. And therefore an image that I brought is the one depicting Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse. I wanted to bring this food for thought to say that in any case, if Minnie is depicted on the menu rather than Mickey Mouse, it can have a greater impact on a girl rather than a boy.

Federica: What if I put them both instead?

Serena: Well, if I put them both in my opinion they wouldn't affect so much in the sense that the Mickey Mouse cartoon is centered on Mickey Mouse, that is, in "Mickey Mouse House" Minnie is not mentioned, that is, so I think a child who watches Mickey Mouse is a fan of Mickey Mouse, Minnie all the other characters are a side dish, this also makes you think a little, but oh well. And so I think that minnie is more perceived "as close" by the girls rather than by the children, that is, the children especially when they are small, I don't think they have the sense of romance.

Federica: I was thinking more, for example to put both of them even if not embracing, to say, to take both males, that is, that's what I meant

Serena: Ah yes, maybe yes. But yes, yes, oh well, of course, because otherwise they should have different menus to give to the girls. Girls, however, this could also be something to do because I repeat, if they have one or both in the menu, that is, maybe put both but separate in my opinion. I don't know why but I am convinced that separated have more impact. Then maybe it's not like that.

Then another ah, this one, ratatouille, who hasn't seen it? I hope you've seen it because it's gorgeous and so this one came to mind as well, starring a little chef mouse. Ratatouille is not the



name of the mouse, but it is precisely the dish that he cooks, practically made of vegetables, that is, they are all vegetables and therefore I thought that perhaps this would perhaps sell a vegetable combo to slightly older children, maybe I don't know about 10 years. Who understand more that a child of 4 maybe knows less. But a 10-year-old who knows that maybe that dish was made by this iconic Mickey Mouse from the cartoon, in my opinion can, can, could entice him to eat. here's another photo I brought about the age difference. Nvabbè no, but it is food for thought because obviously at 10 you watch cartoons differently than a 5 year old and above all you understand less, that is, therefore perhaps you could play more on a menu in my opinion also done a bit like game. that is, for example, perhaps presenting a menu to color in or maybe here with cartoons yes, but maybe to color in or a menu for example like this in which practically everything is coloured, with few writings, with these too, for example, being generic cartoons , but in my opinion they are visibly more "approachable" by children.

Federica: So let's say that in this case a generic cartoon associated with a game concept could work.

Serena: Yes, yes. and therefore obviously also go and see the age difference in the children, but obviously I realize that a restaurant cannot take care of all these things, but maybe make a type of menu for a younger and an older age group in my opinion it can also have an impact because there are also many pubs, for example with initiatives such as themed sandwiches, I don't know if you've ever seen, or really clubs with themed areas, that is, what do I know Harry Potter on the one hand Marvel stuff , on the other.

Federica: I mean, so you choose where to go?

Serena: Yes, so maybe if you're a Marvel fan, go there and there are all the dishes that have a specific name, which in any case belongs to that film or that type of film. Now here it's movies, but in my opinion also with cartoons, for example, there's also a club with The Simpsons. In reality, The Simpsons are a little less educational, however, Eh, in my opinion they also have a themed place in addition to the menu.

Federica: Yes, but you could actually, as you said, put up a corner called Simpsons, but in reality you only go there because it's The Simpsons, but you eat something that they bring you, that they choose. Maybe made of vegetables

Serena: Exactly, exactly. Then, ah I brought the photo of arm wrestling because oh well, iconic I always looked at it because I remember that even when I was little knowing that this arm wrestling ate this spinach to be stronger has always intrigued me. Then I also read the story a little because I thought, I mean, who knows if this thing is true? They made it on purpose to entice children to eat spinach, being a carton. In reality yes, like after the Second World War there was an iron shortage, something like that and in any case to entice children to eat it was the initiative of a

pharmaceutical company. Even if in reality this cartoon, i.e. after the iron thing, i.e. spinach which contains a lot of iron, was also a bit Eh, let's say lost

Federica: however, so this theme is also important for the socio-political and cultural context.

Serena: Yeah, it was on purpose and so I think that's a really big thing anyway, which is associated with a cartoon. actually a lot is done nowadays, there are cartoons that oh well are made just for mere entertainment like Simpson, maybe even a little. Too much, that is, for slightly older children. And instead other cartoons, for example this one which in my opinion helps to associate a positive thing, whether it's eating spinach, or whatever it is to help others, etc. I say this from experience, because I have a little brother who, when he was little, was obsessed with this cartoon in which they were all like superheroes with particular powers, like they helped others, etc. So he, let's say, took these cartoons as a point of reference for making good actions. In my opinion it is important, then also for nutrition. Oh. Then another thing that I actually discovered when I was very old, that is that the Dragon Ball characters oh well, Dragon Ball by now very famous, that is we, class 99 saw it all, so let alone now, practically some have the names of vegetables.

Federica: what are you saying? So vegetate

Serena: I swear to you. That's right, that's right, vegeta means vegetable, or kakarot means carrot. Radish, Radicchio. Nap is a type of cabbage, to name a few. In my opinion it was not done by chance, that is in the sense that perhaps this can work a little more with Japanese children. However, to say, that is, it is not something to be ignored. Here maybe associating a carrot in a menu and calling it kakarot to say nonsense, which is precisely a member of a Dragon Ball character could in my opinion entice a child to eat that product more.

Another idea that came to my mind is instead, for example here are the Pokemon but actually for any cartoon, that is, as they do at McDonald's they give the children's menu, the happy meal with the surprise inside that makes you want more the child to eat. In this case, of course, we are dealing with junk food, but in my opinion, if something like this were done even in a restaurant where perhaps there is a menu to discover, i.e. also the fact that the dish is not brought like this, but also to be opened, as if it were a sort of surprise, it would have a greater impact on the perception that that menu is good and then above all perhaps rewarding the child with a toy like they do at Mc. very often I also see adults who take the happy meal as a surprise, since very often they also collaborate with Marvel, etc. And so in my opinion a child takes the happy meal not for the sandwich, because in the end it's the same thing, but for the surprise for sure. Ah then one more thing oh well, here's a picture of my Little pony but really for anything, in fact there's also one of Nemo. I found this story online of this dad in America who practically cooked for his children to go to school and prepared these super decorated dishes for them every day when they go to school, that is, really worked with the image of my Little pony or with images of Nemo and

if we notice they are still healthy things, this is pasta, these are raspberries, a salad leaf, etc. So in my opinion this is bringing a menu not only perhaps depicting a type of cardboard right on the menu, but also doing it as a dish in my opinion would make you want to eat so much.

Federica: Yes, but maybe just to show how the dish will arrive, so draw a drawing on the menu, so one already knows what will arrive.

Serena: Possibly the same, because sometimes the images are mangled. Then I brought this here of Winnie the pooh and tiger, who practically eat this Sandwich with salad, tomatoes and so I thought that in my opinion maybe put this too in a type of image on a colorful menu, as I said before etcetera, very famous cartoon , maybe they're eating this salad sandwich and so on that's very visible, so I screened it, because it really showed. Yes, I think this could also have an effect.

Federica: Ah, so in your opinion could it be useful to put the character eating something healthy?

Serena: Yes Exactly, this is exactly the concept, because maybe seeing the character eat that type of thing the child says "then I'll eat it too", if he eats it maybe Winnie the Pooh to say I'll eat it too and this is something I actually also found in video cartoons, that is, they really showed that character who, to entice children to eat vegetables, for example, ate broccoli and because one of his heroes ate broccoli.

Then I brought this for example all colored. Maybe it could also be in black and white, maybe provide colors and let the children color while they wait, to say this too, maybe this too for the children, a. Little ones Always connected to the concept of both the game and the characters.

Federica: all right, Chiarissimo, then now. In reality, you already told me this before, I remember that there was an image that you wanted to bring me but you didn't screen it, what was it?

Serena: Yes, yes, it was a picture basically about the age difference between children that could help me in the speech. The image depicted a small and a large child, just to talk about the concept of age, however a cartoon may be better known by a 10-year-old rather than a 5-year-old.

Serena: Now take all the images you have, let's divide them into groups by relating them to each other, those that have a common meaning, variable or reason

Serena: Okay. So the photos that I have put together are those of spongebob, ratatouille, Winnie the Pooh and arm wrestling, because oh well, in all of them dishes are depicted and also because in any case based on the concept of showing what that type of cardboard.

Federica: Even this thing they're eating, how can we put it in one word, emulation? Lead by example?

Serena: Yes, exactly.

Federica: Ok, then next time.

Serena: So more photos, oh well, that of Dragon Ball with Superman, minnie and Mickey Mouse. I would put them together because in any case they depict characters who with the simple fact of

being famous can have a greater impact on eating a type of thing, even healthy, because in any case take goku, for example, he is very famous or Superman and the same thing is Mickey Mouse. Instead another photo that I would leave just by itself. It is the one of the menu made in the Happy meal way with the surprise inside because it has variables in common, certainly with the concept of a game of discovery, but it is a thing in itself, because presenting the menu in this way changes All.

Then practically all types of menus, i.e. therefore two colored menus that I showed and also the types of dishes together, for example Barbie's hamburger and the two things from Nemo and my Little pony, i.e. the two already made menus, because anyway here, also in this case the focus is a bit on the aesthetics of the dish, therefore on the all-pink Barbie burger, my Little pony with the pony and Nemo drawn on it. Same thing, then the aesthetics. and then oh well, maybe these are two separate groups, I don't know.

Federica: Haven't you already put them together?

Serena: Oh yes, yes I put them together, oh well menu obviously, because yes, even here the focus is on aesthetics. So yes, because in the end the aesthetics are all colored and also on the concept of the game, that is, perhaps a menu in this case is already colored. But if it were black and white, would you like to...

Federica: Let's do this, colored dishes are aesthetics and Barbie's too, while colored menus can be a game concept. OK, we have these four groups. Ok, now let's select one, two or more piles among these that we have created and put together those that are similar to each other and those instead that don't match each other? You have sometimes had the doubt whether to put them together or not. therefore we have said that one is drawings of dishes, that is, of food, I must say of food and example: group one. Then another is game. Another, the aesthetics. Then recognition of famous people. OK, of these 5 which ones are comparable?

Serena: So drawings of food and aesthetics, why perhaps bring the menu with my Little pony depicted and maybe put a my Little pony on the menu to color in to say, in my opinion it can be. A combo. And then recognition of famous people, I would put it to himself. Even packaging and happy meals I would put them on their own

Federica: Now let's order these strategies by importance for my thesis, from the most important to the least important. So there's no need for a reason here

Serena: packaging in first place, play and aesthetics together in second, celebrities in third and food drawings in fourth. In my opinion, the packaging is the first thing, because the fact of having a surprise inside is everything. In my opinion it affects a lot.

Federica: So now take all the images you brought me, find me the most representative one, the most important for me, for my goals and the least representative one.

Serena: Well, also based on what I've said now, I think the most representative is precisely the packaging. So this one of the Pokemon with Happy meal, the less representative one I would say that of Winnie the Pooh

Federica: Now if you succeed, attribute each image, to the 5 senses an image or to a concept What did you bring me?

Serena: Guess I'd put this winnie the pooh one, because it could make you salivate to see the figure of the sandwich already. And oh well, same thing, if maybe this type of menu from my Little pony or this from Nemo or even the Barbie Burger is depicted on the menu. smell, well, let's say Ratatouille, maybe because you have a chef anyway, so maybe in the kitchen. touch perhaps, the happy meal, the package, the surprise as well, so yes. And then View in my opinion Superman; I don't know if there's a study that certifies this thing, I'll find out, but in my opinion the colors of how Superman is dressed have a sense, yes, red and yellow, which then in the end are also a bit of the McDonald's, so maybe yes.

Federica: Blue definitely, even on Facebook people are attracted by the color.

Serena: Exactly, it attracts a lot, so I'd say superman and maybe a little Dragon Ball, because in any case they're all coloured, hyper-coloured, even the hair, maybe coloured, what do I know, blue, so yes

Federica: OK. Finally, I play.

Serena: Something that can summon sound...But you know, maybe nothing?

Federica: Ok, let's sum up the interview and in conclusion is the use of these characters effective or not, in your opinion?

Serena: Yes, in my opinion a lot, because as I said at the beginning, children feel portrayed a lot, especially in age, that is when they are little, maybe before 10 years they are more impressionable, so seeing cartoons and also seeing cartoons menus can affect a lot. although in reality one thing I thought is that nowadays children don't know if they watch cartoons so much, that is since we are in the era of social networks, I think they watch them less. I happen more often to see a child with the phone in hand rather than a child perhaps watching cartoons but in reality it has also happened to me unfortunately I say unfortunately because it was a bit annoying for example being in a pizzeria and perhaps seeing a mother who is not there it made her more than hearing the baby cry, she took the tablet and put it in front of the cartoon and the baby attracted by the cartoon calms down. So yes, in my opinion cartoons will never go out of style and above all seeing them depicted on a menu has a lot in my opinion.

Federica: Lastly, if you had to imagine a truly anti-child menu, how would you see it?


Serena: I would see it without colors, therefore black and white, with maybe small writing or maybe even a little difficult to read characters, you know those particular characters that could

be elegant for an adult, but maybe a child who or maybe can't read or even better he can read recently he would be less attracted. And then oh well without images, that is just black and white, simple, sad.

Federica: Okay serene thank you very much, are you aware and do you give your consent to the use of this information that you gave me today?

Serena: Yes, of course yes.

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.....  
MARA ANTONIETTA FIAGIELLO  
(nome e cognome in stampatello)

acconsento

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.....INTERVISTA ZMET PER TESI MAGISTRALE PETRELLA FEDERICA.....  
che ha avuto luogo a .....ACERRA (NA).....

in data .....28/06/2023.....  
possa essere utilizzata a scopo didattico e di ricerca.

.....ACERRA 28/06/2023.....  
(luogo e data)

In fede  
.....Roberta Girardi.....  
(firma)

  
LUISS

Io sottoscritto/a  
.....CONCETTA TERRACIANO.....  
(nome e cognome in stampatello)


accenso

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.....INTERVISTA ZMET TESI MAGISTRALE PETRELLA FEDERICA.....  
che ha avuto luogo a .....ACERRA (NA).....

in data .....28/04/2023.....  
possa essere utilizzata a scopo didattico e di ricerca.

.....ACERRA (NA) 28/04/2023.....  
(luogo e data)

In fede  
.....Concetta Terraciano.....  
(firma)

  
LUISS

Io sottoscritto/a  
.....SERENA PIGARDI.....  
(nome e cognome in stampatello)

accenso

a che la registrazione audio/video della mia conferenza/del mio intervento intitolata/o  
.....INTERVISTA ZMET TESI MAGISTRALE PETRELLA FEDERICA.....  
che ha avuto luogo a .....ACERRA (NA).....

in data .....02/05/2023.....  
possa essere utilizzata a scopo didattico e di ricerca.

.....ACERRA 04/05/2023.....  
(luogo e data)

In fede  
.....Serena Pigardi.....  
(firma)

◇ ZMET VISUAL MATERIAL





# ZMET INTERVIEW

SERENA PICARDI

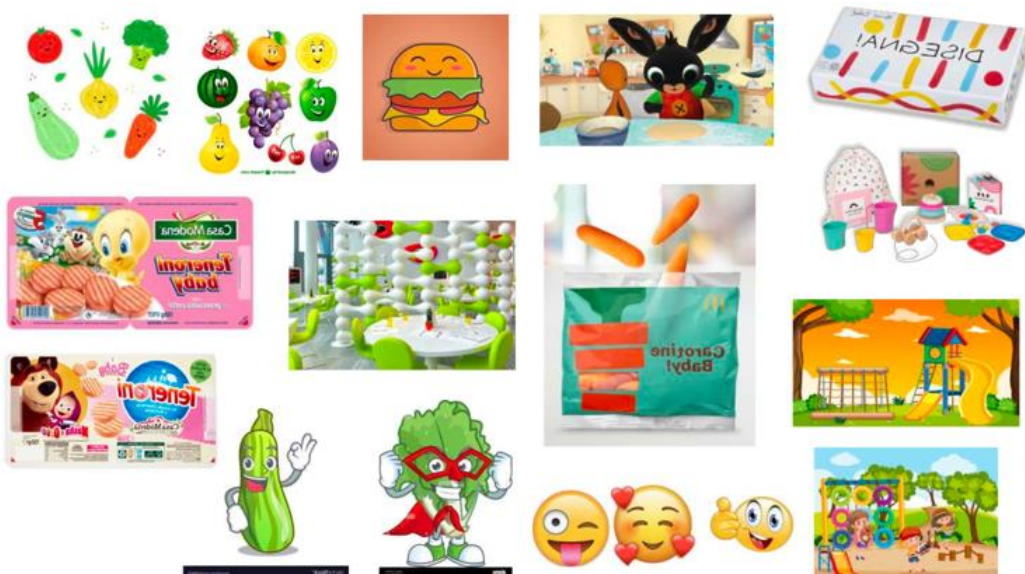
Sociology graduate and former community Scout Leader



# ZMET INTERVIEW

MARIATERESA CALIENDO

Marketing Manager and Mother of two children aged 4 and 8 years



# ZMET INTERVIEW

CONCETTA TERRACCIANO

Psychologist



## ◇ CODING TABLE OF INTERVIEWS

AMADIA

OVERARCHING THEME	SUB THEME	SAMPLE TEXT OF ANSWERS
Importance of Visuals	Visuals Aid Comprehension.  Association with Colors	"I first of all chose an image that really represents a menu. Based on my experience, summer camp, animation, etc., I realized that, yes, it's true, children often need a motivation or something close... It is important to perhaps associate the word written on the menu with an image, so that the child sees the salad or sees the sandwich and says 'yes, I want the sandwich, I want the chips, I want the salad' to the parents."

Influence of Characters	Role of Cartoon Characters. Transition to Real-Life Role Models.	"We were a little more associated with the fact of the images, like, I don't know, I see the princess on the menu so I say 'oh this princess eats this sandwich or eats this type of dish, so it means that to be a princess I have to eat the same dish' or the same thing children did for superheroes... It still depends on the age groups."
Age Groups and Preferences	Age-Related Differences.	" Children up to 6 years old still manage to be subjected to those who are cartoons... With the introduction of social media and especially Youtube, as we know, with the introduction of famous youtubers, children tend to follow them more as mentors, as a cue, rather than cartoons..."
Techniques of Persuasion	Persuasion through Narrative.	"Everything starts from there, you have to fictionalize, let's say what the children want to hear, you have to influence them in some way... You have to use these techniques at home too."
Influence of Familiar Characters	Familiar Characters on Menus.	That's why I brought, oh well, the emblem, the only youtuber I know personally which is Favij... He manages to influence so much... they see him, precisely as an emblem, as a person to follow, a model to imitate."
Opposite Strategy	Ineffectiveness of Plain Menus.	A white menu with no colors, all writing, maybe the writing isn't even of a particular character, simple, it doesn't attract the attention of children... the child trusts the parent, so he says, 'You make it for me' or the children's menu directly."
Gender and Age Considerations	Gender and Character Preferences.	Maybe a girl could be more attracted by a princess or by a specific character rather than perhaps by an Avengers or vice versa... There are still

		boys who are happy if they see the Princess or girls who see the Avengers and say 'oh, how nice. I want to become like an Avengers superhero too.'"
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ROBERTA

OVERARCHING THEME	SUB THEME	SAMPLE OF TEXT
Role of Cartoon Characters	Emulation of Characters. Identification with Characters. Influence on Food Choices.	"In my opinion, it is not so important to insert images of healthy food, but we should focus more on the characters who reproduce it. So strong and robust tug of war that emanates energy could be an excellent character who would encourage you to eat healthier."
Imaginative Representation	Use of Imagery and Cartoons: Realistic vs. Imaginative Portrayals	"Children make everything a game, so inserting the game into correct nutrition is, in my opinion, a very successful strategy."
Music and Rhymes	Incorporating Musical Elements Use of Nursery Rhymes	"Sportacus, Lazy Town because in any case he is the superhero who in the cartoon where he is found also attributes musicality, which is another important element for children. There are also many songs that can work, many nursery rhymes that can work to incite children."
Games and Interactivity	Use of Games to Promote Health Making Healthy Choices Interactive	"Maybe I would have liked to find an image of a game where you can also choose food on the menu. You could put a slogan, a little nursery rhyme that can stick in your head because children memorize a lot, and therefore it can stick in your head while eating."

Familiarity of Characters	Known vs. Invented Characters Popularity of Superheroes	"it is also right to put a female character for females and male for males. A known character works more than a common one."
Sharing and Happiness	Importance of Sharing Meals Conveying Happiness and Enjoyment	"In this image there are children who are really smiling because eating is also sharing; therefore, however, putting an image where there is 'happiness,' children smiling while eating is an excellent intention to introduce healthy food."
Taste and Senses	Appealing to the Sense of Taste Connection to the Five Senses	"I could give you the taste with this one of the Ninja turtles because they still eat pizza compared to arm wrestling who eats spinach."
Importance of Emulation	Children's Desire to Emulate Characters Characters as Role Models	"Superheroes can also be linked to emulation, as children always tend to watch superheroes. Superheroes also like cartoons, because how many children watch superheroes, cartoons in general."
Anti-Effectiveness	Unattractive, Realistic Portrayals Lack of Appeal to Children	I can imagine, like salad or Brussels sprouts portrayed in an ugly way, much more real than imaginative. Too realistic."

## MARIATERESA

OVERARCHING THEME	SUB THEME	SAMPLE OF TEXT
Description of Chosen Images	Depiction of Fruits Superhero-Themed Images Convenient Meal Options Softies and Candies	Most of the images I have chosen concern fruit and vegetables because I have often heard other mothers speak who demonize the role of fruit and vegetables in children. In my case, this was not the case because my children love fruit in particular, and I think this is

		<p>due to the fact that we have always had an approach to food through this type of image. So this, in short, was the choice of this typology, i.e., this was the motivation for choosing these images. As for the other images, I was inspired by the cartoons they usually watch, therefore Bing and Masha and the Bear, because they often talked about these foods during the cartoons that they never wanted to taste or I never prepared for them. Thanks to these cartoons, they chose to taste them and then they started eating them from that moment on.”</p>
Effectiveness of Interventions	<p>Encouraging Healthier Choices</p> <p>Preference for Image-Based Menus</p>	<p>“For example, the little one doesn't really like fish, but he eats it because when we usually go to restaurants and they bring us chips, for example, on top of them, they put colorful and so from that time on I said, I have to buy them too and I bought some appetizers which I'll show you above later have toy cars, a flamingo, fruit, in short, colored. And practically every. Once we eat fish, I put appetizers on top. And then I do who wants the car, who wants the flamingo, and they eat everything.”</p>
Importance of Variety and Choice	<p>Providing Food Variety</p> <p>School Menus' impact</p>	<p>Yes, like in the school where fried foods are excluded, it seems to me and pre-frozen things, in short, pre-fried and so on. Yes, absolutely, that is, it could be an extra incentive to make children understand the importance of variety in vegetables and fruit.</p>
Use of the Senses	<p>Visual Appeal</p> <p>Challenges in Other Sense</p>	

Importance of Naming Dishes	Creative Dish Naming	also in my opinion, to justify the choice of that food, why do you make pasta with pumpkin, why do you make pasta with carrots because carrots are healthy because they are used for vitamin D, for the sun, etc. and so they are happier to eat this thing.
Explanation of Food Choices	Explaining Healthy Choices	the menu with all the writing, that is the classic menu they usually offer without images, without character in relief, etc. It doesn't work for me. One because it's unappealing to us adults. I get bored of reading there is so much variety of things that then I get confused and then punctually then I always choose the same thing. Even more so for children, it can be practically useless and therefore unattractive. It's also those things that then usually lead me to choose for them rather than making them choose. I mean, maybe you know, they're not attracted to images.

SERENA

<b>OVERARCHING THEME</b>	<b>SUB THEME</b>	<b>SAMPLE OF TEXT</b>
Influence of Cartoons on Children's Food Choice	Identification with Cartoons Familiarity with Famous Characters	"Yes, because I believe that in any case a child, especially when he is small, identifies with the cartoons he watches and especially lately there is the mania for Marvel, for superheroes."  "So I think that children,

		<p>however, in one way or another feel represented and therefore know maybe that on the menu there is that type of superhero rather than another - this is one of the photos, in fact, that I brought - Definitely makes the child choose the one."</p>
Visual Appeal and Aesthetics	<p>Visual Presentation of Food</p> <p>Emulating Food Presentation from Cartoons</p>	<p>"Therefore, however putting an image where there is 'happiness,' children smiling while eating is an excellent intention to introduce healthy food."</p> <p>"And enjoy it with everyone the senses means that in any case you have to savor everything, not only with taste, but also a beautiful thing, it must be in order to be eaten."</p>
Emulation and Role Modeling	<p>Characters as Role Models</p>	<p>"Because, anyway, they want to look like superheroes."</p> <p>"Superheroes also like cartoons, because how many children watch superheroes, cartoons in general."</p> <p>"In any case, it is also right to make a difference, because children in any case look, as I said before, at their peers, therefore for females they see a superhero rather than a superhero, while for males a superhero rather than a superhero."</p>
Surprise and Packaging	<p>Surprise Element</p>	<p>"In reality yes, like after the Second World War there was an iron shortage, something like that and in any case to entice children to eat it was the initiative of a pharmaceutical company."</p> <p>"And so in my opinion a child takes the happy meal not for</p>



		the sandwich, because in the end it's the same thing, but for the surprise for sure."
Gender Considerations	Gender-Specific Marketing	"Girls, however, this could also be something to do because I repeat, if they have one or both in the menu, that is, maybe put both but separate in my opinion. I don't know why but I am convinced that separated have more impact."
Age-Appropriate Marketing	Age Segmentation	"And therefore an image that I brought is the one depicting Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse. I wanted to bring this food for thought to say that in any case, if Minnie is depicted on the menu rather than Mickey Mouse, it can have a greater impact on a girl rather than a boy."
Multi-Sensory Experience	Engaging Multiple Senses	"I'd put this winnie the pooh one, because it could make you salivate to see the figure of the sandwich already."  "And oh well, same thing, if maybe this type of menu from my Little pony or this from Nemo or even the Barbie Burger is depicted on the menu."
Visual Color Association	Influence of Colors	"I'd say superman and maybe a little Dragon Ball, because in any case they're all coloured, hyper-coloured, even the hair, maybe coloured, what do I know, blue, so yes."
Evolving Media Consumption	Changes in Media Consumption Habits	"In reality one thing I thought is that nowadays children don't know if they watch cartoons so much, that is since we are in the era of social networks, I think they watch them less."
Anti-Child Menu	Unappealing menu for children, lack of color and aesthetic appeal.	"I would see it without colors, therefore black and white, with maybe small writing or maybe even a little difficult to read characters, you know those

		particular characters that could be elegant for an adult, but maybe a child who or maybe can't read or even better he can read recently he would be less attracted. And then oh well without images, that is just black and white, simple, sad."
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CONCETTA

<b>OVERARCHING THEME</b>	<b>SUB THEME</b>	<b>SAMPLE OF TEXT</b>
The Influence of Visual Stimuli on Children's Food Choices	Significantly impact of Visual Stimuli  Cognitive Processing involved in how children respond to visual stimuli.	"Children are continually subjected to images, and these images are fundamental because children go by association. More effective for children are the images that reach them because the image remains much more in a child's memory than a sentence."
Promoting Positive Associations with Healthy Food	Positive Image Association  Appeal and Attraction	"And it's hard for a child to want to taste vegetables, right? That is, children always resist tasting vegetables, but it also happened to me with my children, that is, my children who saw Ratatouille and who wanted not only to prepare it but actually to taste it."
Food as a Source of Pleasure and Inspiration	Pleasurable Food Experiences  Inspirational Imagery in trying new food	"The mere thought that this food rains from above, almost like rain and the quantity of food and the way it is proposed, color, shape, modality, the wonder in the eyes of these protagonists, makes you want to eat."

Transforming Perceptions of Food Through Imagery	<p>Transformative Imagery</p> <p>Reinforcement and Positive Messaging</p>	<p>"The rule and the behavior stand out, that is the rule, sitting at the table, the rule is the behavior, that is keeping an appropriate behavior at the table and therefore this can help children both at home and in external contexts, therefore such as restaurants, pizzerias, and so on."</p>
Addressing Food Selectivity and Preferences in Children	<p>Food Selectivity Challenges, in children, particularly those with unique preferences or conditions</p> <p>Therapeutic Strategies through visual aids and Alternative Communication Methods</p>	<p>"Autistic children often have difficulty in trying new consistencies, new tastes, so things are gradually proposed in small steps. The images are essential both for the able-bodied and for children who have difficulties."</p>

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