

DOCTORAL THESIS

Promoting healthy eating among children using regulatory fit theory

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Promoting Healthy Eating Among Children Using Regulatory Fit Theory

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

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Abstract

This thesis links the consumer socialization model with regulatory focus theory by investigating the impacts of socializing agents and social structural variables on the regulatory focus of children. A sampling survey was conducted among 718 Hong Kong secondary school students (age 11–17). Results of hierarchical regression show that concept-oriented parent-child communication about consumption and age predict a promotion focus. Also, the results indicate that socio-oriented parent-child communication about consumption and gender predict a prevention focus. This thesis also tests the effects of a celebrity endorser when using regulatory fit theory to promote healthy eating in children. A 2 x 2 x 2 experiment was conducted, using the same sample. The participants were randomly assigned one of the eight conditions and were exposed to a print advertisement. Results of ANOVA identified interaction effects on cognitive response with both the gender of the celebrity endorser and the individual's focus. Interaction effects were also observed to occur on cognitive response with both the gender of celebrity endorser and the message focus. Theoretical and social implications are discussed and future research directions are proposed.

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