

Digital Food Marketing to Teenagers: Insights from the GrabFM! Study

Charlene Elliott, PhD
Professor, Communication and Research Excellence Chair
University of Calgary
celliott@ucalgary.ca





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Monitoring child and teen exposure to food and beverage advertising: About

About

Diet is one of the most important factors in preventing obesity and diet-related chronic disease

Good nutrition is the foundation of children's health and development. Poor childhood nutrition harms physical and cognitive development. ¹

Advertising influences diet

Exposure to advertising affects children's food preferences, requests and intake. ² This influence can continue into adulthood.

Some foods can contribute to excess intakes of sodium, sugars and saturated fat. We know that a lot of exposure to ads for these foods contributes to diet-related chronic disease.

We're taking action to monitor food and beverage advertising to children and teens in Canada

Food and beverage advertising makes healthy eating initiatives less effective and makes it harder to follow Canada's Food Guide. That's why we're monitoring food and beverage advertising to children and teens in Canada.

Monitoring food and beverage advertising supports evidence-based policy, and strengthens our understanding of what influences healthy eating. It also lets us evaluate trends over time and identify gaps in evidence.



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(PDF format, 723.1 KB, 2 pages)

Organization: [Health Canada](#)

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/nutrition-science-research/monitoring-food-beverage-advertising-children.html>

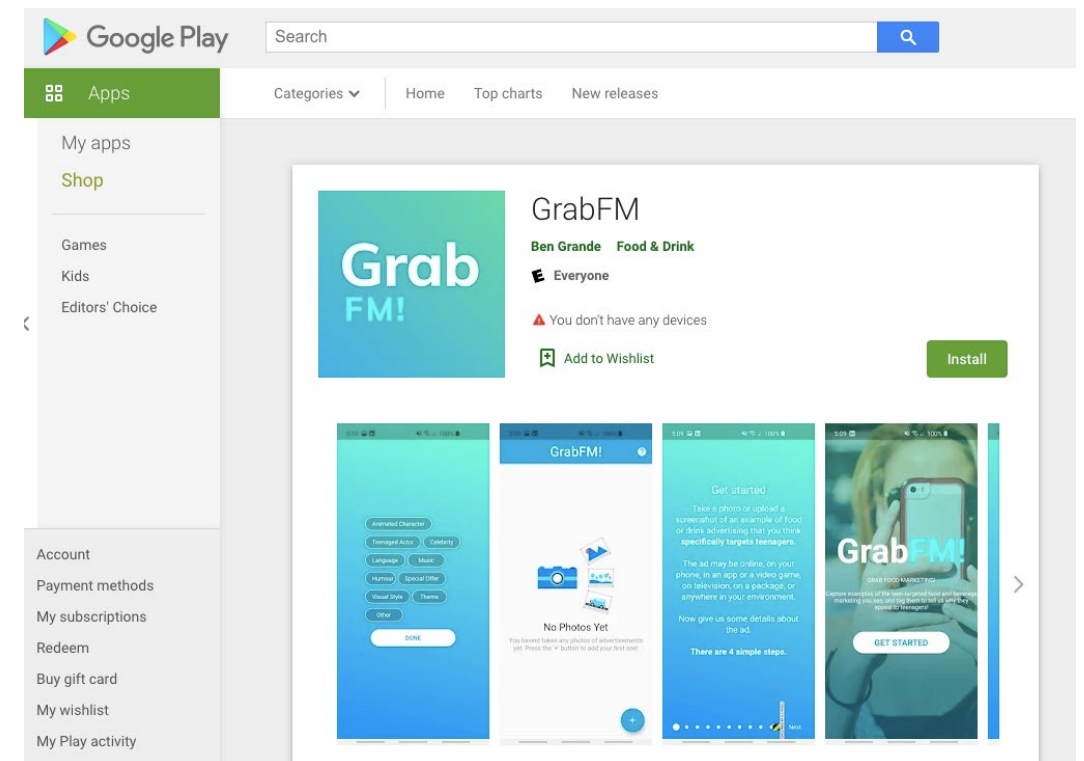
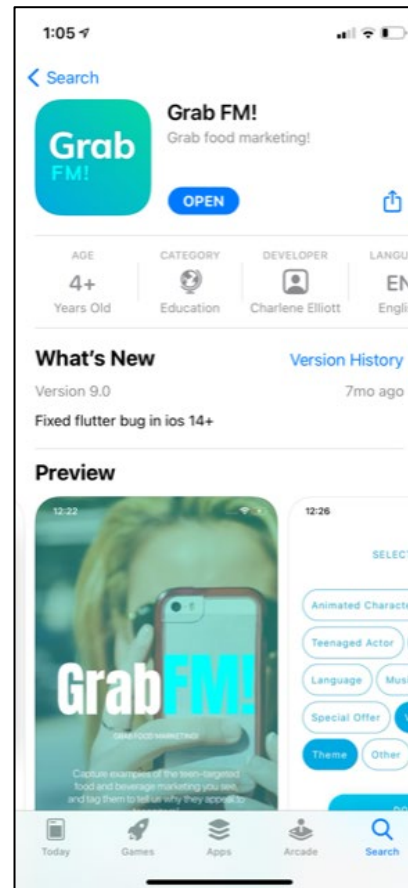
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/food-nutrition/food-beverage-advertising-children-teens-canada.html>

GrabFM!: Research Objectives

- To examine **persuasive power**: the content of teen-targeted food marketing
- To examine **platforms of exposure**: the reach of teen-targeted food marketing
- To investigate intersections between power and exposure: how food marketing targets teen audiences (in light of age and gender)

GrabFM! App: Grab Food Marketing!

- **GrabFM! ("Grab Food Marketing!") is a mobile app)**
- Allows teenagers (aged 13-17) to capture images of the food and beverage advertising that specifically targets them.



Here's an example:

Take a screenshot or photo of teen-targeted food or beverage marketing:



Upload into the app, and fill in each of the four fields:

A screenshot of the 'Photo Submission Details' form in the app. It shows a thumbnail of the Pizzapops post at the top. Below the thumbnail are four input fields: 'Enter Brand Name', 'Enter Product Type', 'Select Platform', and 'Select Tags'. At the bottom is a 'Submit Photo' button.

STEP 1. Enter the brand:

A screenshot of the brand name input screen. The text 'Pizza Pops' is entered into the field, and a 'DONE' button is visible below it. The keyboard shows the word 'Pops' selected in the suggestions.

STEP 2. Enter the product:

A screenshot of the product type input screen. The text 'Pizza' is entered into the field, and a 'DONE' button is visible below it. The keyboard shows the word 'Pizzas' selected in the suggestions.

STEP 3. Select the platform where the teen-targeted marketing was found:

A screenshot of the platform selection screen. Various platforms are listed as buttons: Facebook, Food or Beverage Packaging, Instagram, Magazine, Twitch, Outdoor Billboard, Sign/Poster, Snapchat, Sponsored Team/Event, TV, TikTok, Twitter, Video Game, Website, and YouTube. The 'Instagram' button is highlighted, and a 'DONE' button is at the bottom.

STEP 4. Select the tag (or tags) that describe(s) the teen-targeted content of the marketing:

A screenshot of the tag selection screen. Various tags are listed as buttons: Cartoon Character, Teenaged Actor, Celebrity, Language, Music, Humour, Special Offer, Visual Style, Theme, Interactivity, and Other - You Tell Us!. The 'Humour' and 'Visual Style' buttons are highlighted, and a 'DONE' button is at the bottom.

Click "done" to submit, and to save to personal library of images.

A screenshot of the 'Image' submission confirmation screen. It shows a thumbnail of the submitted image at the top. Below it, the submitted information is displayed: BRAND NAME (Pizza Pops), PRODUCT TYPE (Pizza), PLATFORM (Instagram), TAGS (Humour, Visual Style), and IMAGE DATE (2021-06-04 17:09:26). A large 'Done' button is at the bottom.

GrabFM! by the numbers

Phase 3, CIHR Grant, 2022-2025, **4095 teen-targeted ads submitted**

- **1131** teens recruited from schools, community groups, sports teams, and Instagram from across Canada; **509** final participants
- The majority were girls (76%) and older teens (68% ages 16-17)
- 4,095 teen-targeted food advertisements were submitted

Top 5 platforms captured

Phase 3 data: Frequency and proportion of advertisements by platform (n=4,095)

Rank	Platform	Frequency (n)	Proportion (%)
1	Instagram	1,404	34.3
2	TikTok	879	21.5
3	Snapchat	700	17.1
4	YouTube	402	9.8
5	Sign/Poster	129	3.2

Top food or beverage categories from Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube

1 (YouTube)



Top 5 food or beverage product categories (N=3,385)

Rank	Category	Frequency (n)	Proportion (%)
1	Beverages	961	28.4
2	Fast Food	889	26.3
3	Candy/Chocolate	593	17.5
4	Snacks	356	10.5
5	Frozen Food	102	3.0



2 (Instagram)



3 (TikTok)

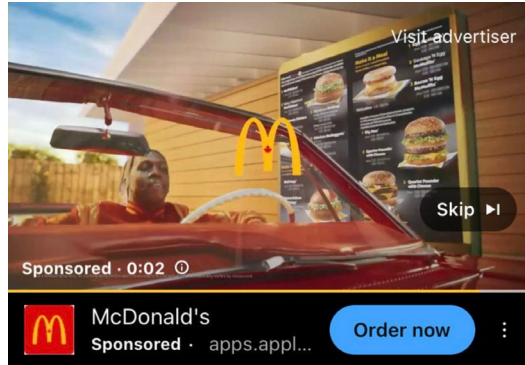


4 (TikTok)



5 (Snapchat)

The “Digital Palate” of Targeted Appeals



1 (YouTube)



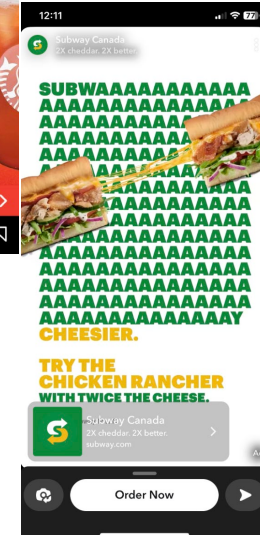
2 (Snapchat)

Top 5 food or beverage brands for Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube (N=3,385)

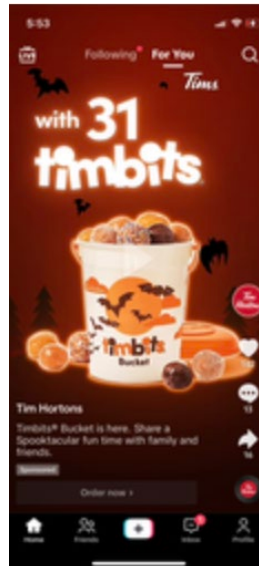
Rank	Brand	Frequency (n)	Proportion (%)
1	McDonald's	213	6.3
2	Coca-Cola	190	5.6
3	Starbucks	161	4.8
4	Subway	133	3.9
5	Tim Hortons	112	3.9



3 (Instagram)



4 (Snapchat)



5 (TikTok)

GrabFM!: Insights into persuasive power

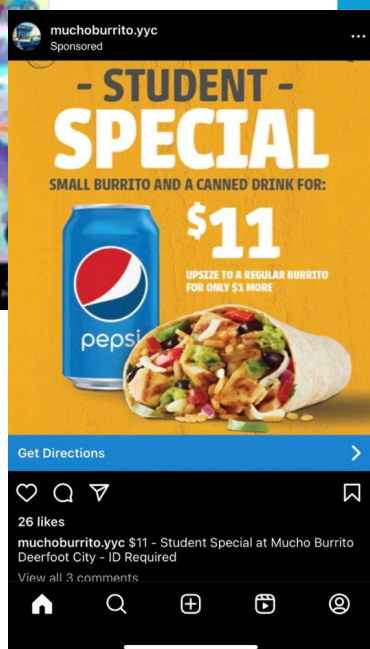
Top persuasive techniques

Frequency and proportion of indicators (n=4,095)

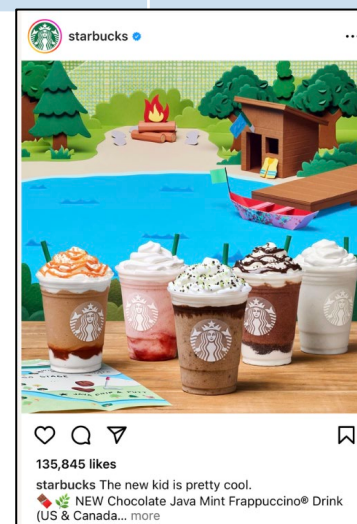
Rank	Indicator	Frequency (n)	Proportion (%)
1	Visual Style	2,143	52.3
2	Special Offer	1,157	28.3
3	Theme	1,086	26.5
4	Humour	719	17.6
5	Music	707	17.3



Visual Style
(TikTok)



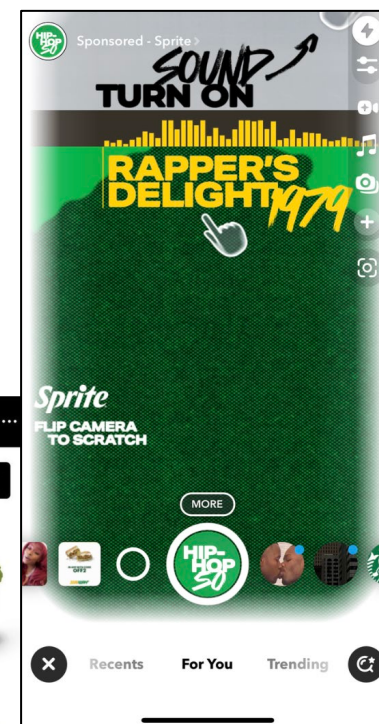
Special Offer
(TikTok)



Theme, Summer
(Instagram)

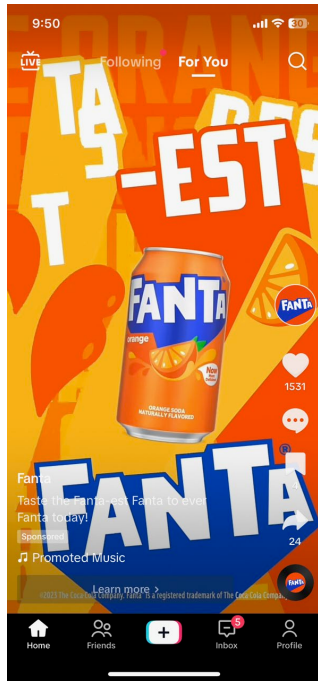


Humour
(Instagram)



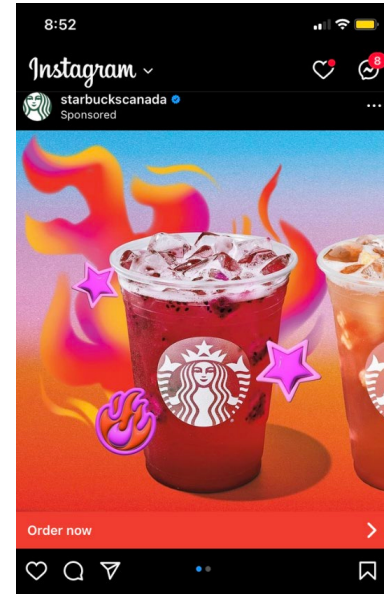
Music
(Snapchat)

Ads tagged for “Visual Style”



TikTok

Snapchat

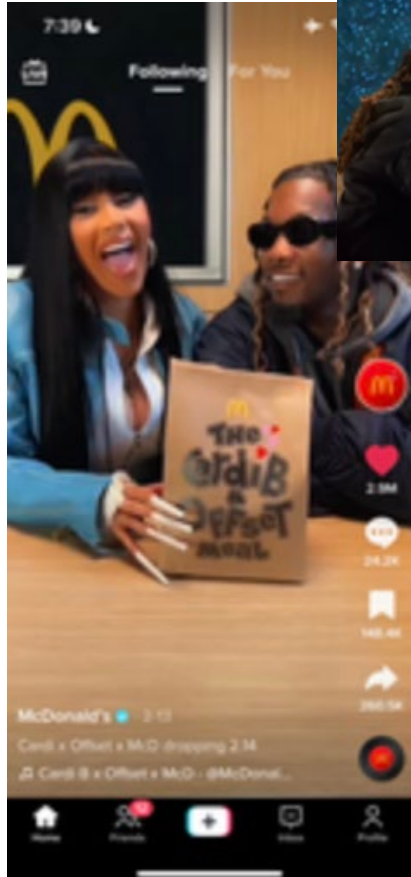


Instagram



YouTube

Ads tagged for “Celebrity”



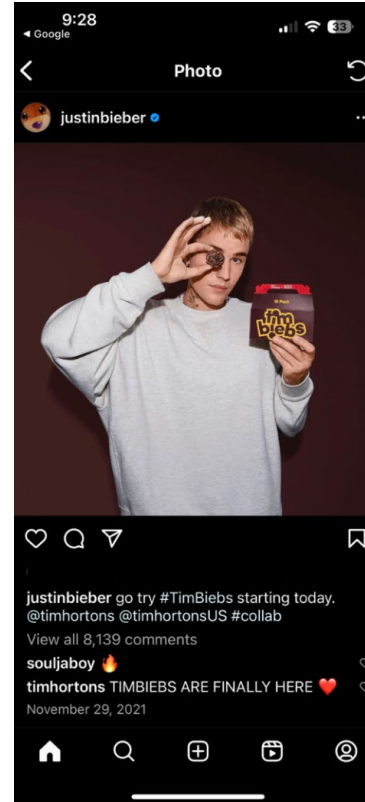
McDonald's
Cardi B and Offset Meal
(TikTok, YouTube)



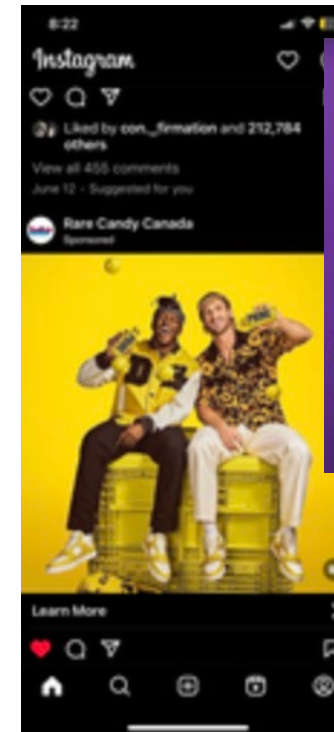
New Jeans McDonald's Meal
(YouTube)



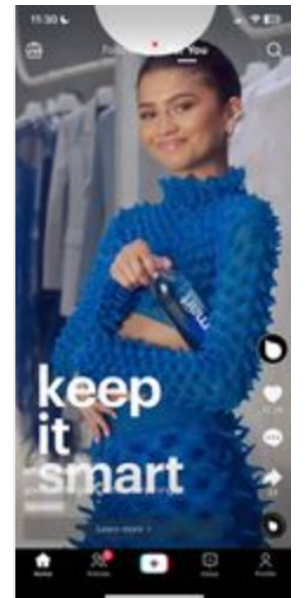
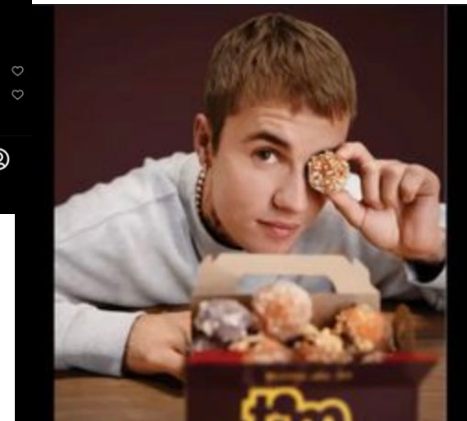
BTS McDonald's Meal
(YouTube)



Tim Horton's
“TimBiebs” Timbits
(Instagram, Website)



PRIME, Logan Paul and KSI
(Instagram, Website)



Smart Water, Zendaya
(TikTok)

Digital Drinks: beverage marketing to teens

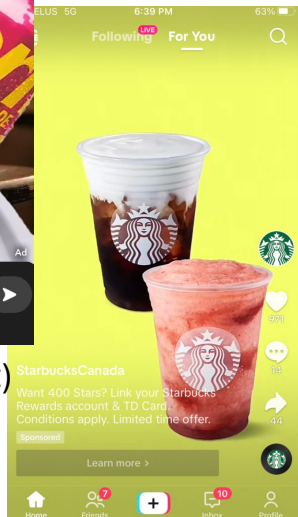
- **1,103 teen-targeted beverage** advertisements were submitted from Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube
- 345 teenagers participated
- 7-day collection period

Top 10 beverage types reported on digital platforms (N=1,103).

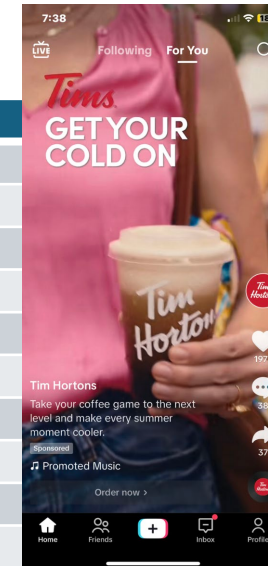
Rank	Category	Frequency (n)	Proportion (%)
1	Soda	381	34.5
2	Blended Drink	228	20.7
3	Coffee	126	11.4
4	Bubble/Boba Tea	100	9.1
5	Fruit Drink/Juice & Iced Tea	83	7.5
6	Energy Drink	54	4.9
7	Multiple Products/No Product	41	3.7
8	Sports Drink	29	2.6
9	Milk/Plant-based Milk	22	2
10	Water/Enhanced Water	17	1.5



Soda (Snapchat)



Blended Drink, TikTok



Coffee (TikTok)



Bubble Tea (Instagram)

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University of Calgary

- Charlene Elliott, PhD
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- Shanshan Shi, MA

Dalhousie University

- Sara Kirk, PhD

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- Jordan LeBel, PhD

ALL ADVERTISING EXAMPLES ARE THOSE COLLECTED BY PARTICIPANTS IN THE GRABFM! STUDY AND HAVE BEEN INCLUDED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY.

