

Nutritional Analysis: Food Advertising During Children's Television Programming in Nepal

Ashlie N. Johnson, BS, BA, Andrew D. Menger-Ogle, PhD, John A. Morgan, BS, Dan J. Graham, PhD
Colorado State University



Background and Objective

- Television advertising of foods to children has been criticized in recent decades by health advocates because:
 - a large proportion of the advertised foods are unhealthy.¹
 - children are more susceptible to advertising messages than adults.²
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has released an agenda for regulation agencies and food industry marketing with the aim of reducing the *exposure and power* of media messages that can lead children to less healthful diet choices.³
- Many appeal types are used to advertise to children.⁴ It is of interest to illuminate the different strategies used in global markets.
- Nepal, a low-income country in south Asia, is experiencing a *nutrition transition*, including a rise in obesity.⁵
- Much of programming in Nepal is sourced from India. It is of additional interest to explore the actual availability of marketed products in Nepal.

Objective was to discover:
What characterizes the TV food marketing landscape for children in Nepal.

Method

- 61 hours of **children's programming** were recorded across 20 days and 3 TV channels airing in **Nepal** but broadcasting from **India**
- Content analysis** on 12 hours of commercials, categorizing nutrition⁶ and marketing appeal type⁴
- Foods categorized via **inductive coding** based on regional salience
- Nutritional profiles** collected for available products and **compared to recommendations** set by The World Health Organization (WHO) and an Interagency Working Group (IWG)^{3,6}

Results

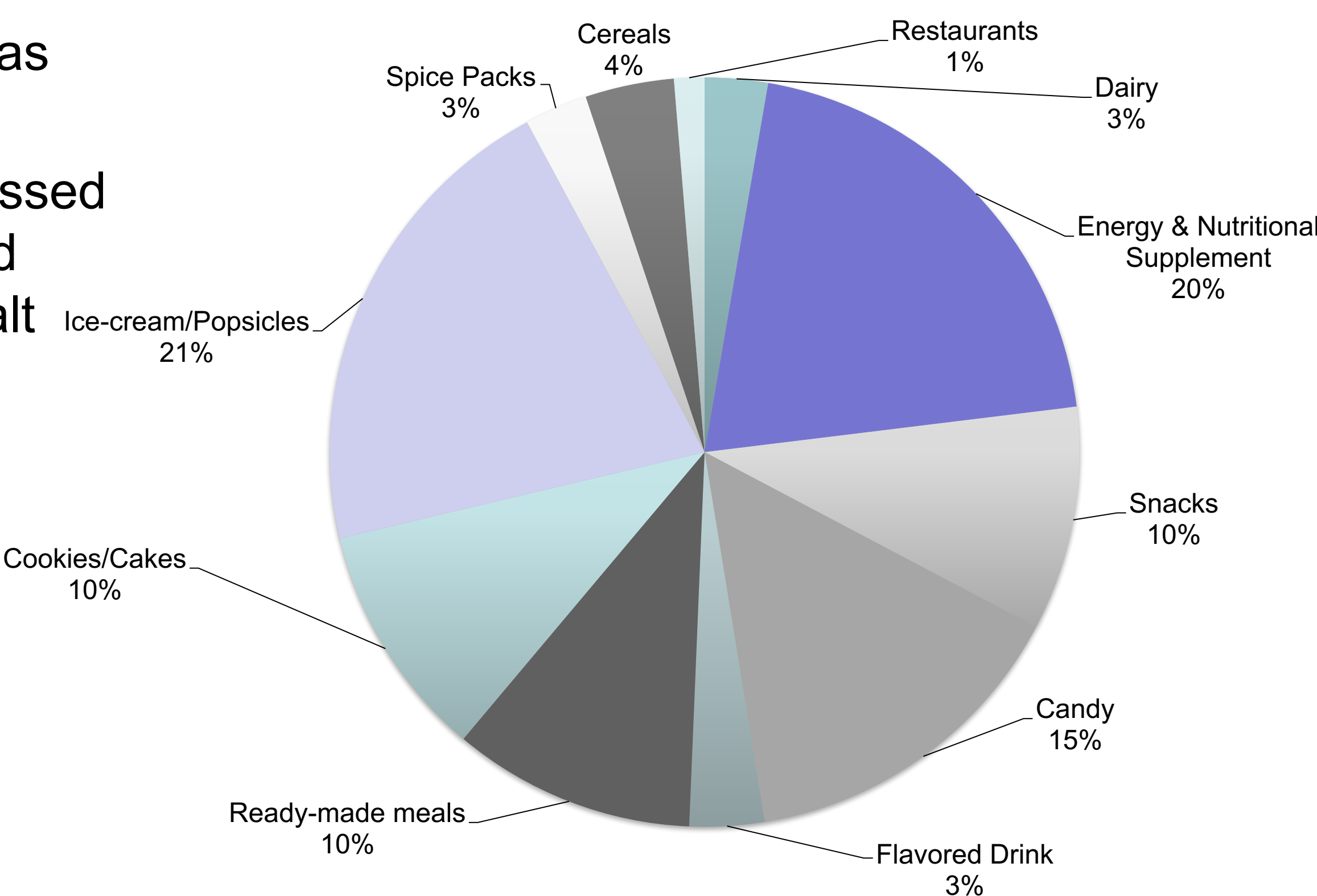
Categories and Nutritional Profiles:

- 54.5% of commercial time was devoted to food advertising
- Majority of foods were processed and exceeded recommended levels of sugar, fat, and/or salt

>80% of foods exceeded ≥1 recommendation by the IWG.

- Exceeded:
 - 1 recommendation = 76.8%,
 - 2 recommendations=4.6%
- Primarily **sugar**: over half (51.7%) of the products exceeded recommendations

Percent of Commercials by Food Category



Nutrient	% of commercials exceeding recommendation (of those with known nutrient info)	% of commercials missing nutrient info
Saturated Fat	33.3%	32.7%
Trans Fat	0%	40.8%
Sugar	51.7%	6.8%
Sodium	18.8%	42%



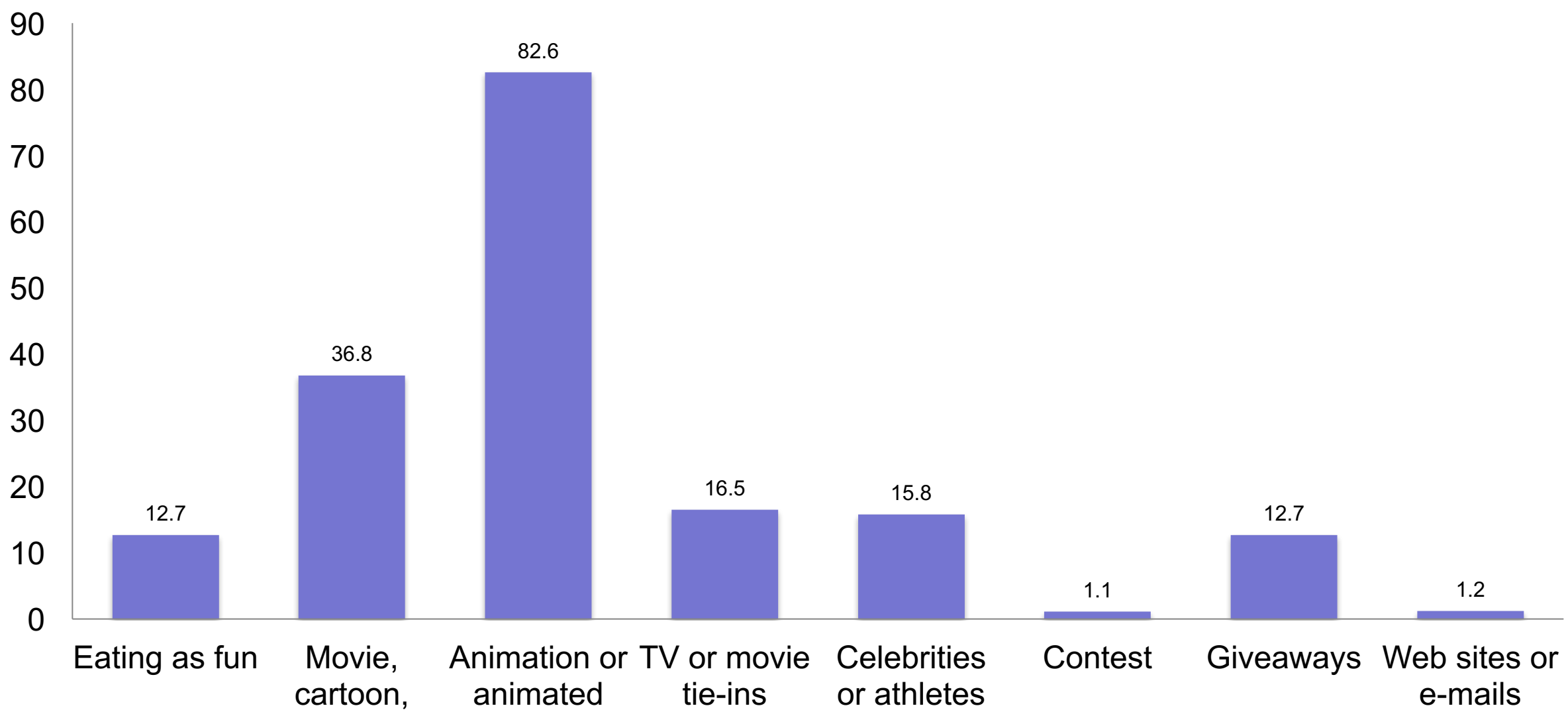
Marketing Appeals and Audience:

- The majority of the commercials targeted either **children** (32.9%) or **children and adults** (38.4%), and used a variety of appeals with **animation** and animated effects being the most common.
- The primary actor (protagonist) of the commercials was typically male.
 - Male child= 33.7%
 - Male adult= 15.9%
 - Female adult=13.7%
 - Female child=12.1%
 - None=23.6%

Availability:

- Most of the products were widely available in Nepal (54.3%).
- However, some had to be purchased from specialty shops (35.4%) or were not available for purchase (10.2%)

Percent of Commercials by Advertising Appeal Types



Discussion

- Most TV ads in this Nepali sample do **not meet WHO recommendations** for advertising to children.
 - Most food advertisements (80%) **expose children to unhealthy products** that have too much sugar, fat, or sodium.
 - Most food advertisements (99.4%) use techniques (such as animation and animated effects) that the WHO identifies as being **highly powerful in their appeal** to child audiences.
- These Nepali ads were somewhat **gendered** in their primary character selection.
- Only 54% of the products featured were widely **available for purchase**.
- As food markets and marketing practices become more global, **nutrition transitions** in developing nations may result.
- The food media trends targeting Nepal's youth may foretell a **rise in less healthful diets** among the new generation.

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