

A Qualitative Study on Children's Food Habits, Preferences, and Recall of Televised Food Advertisements

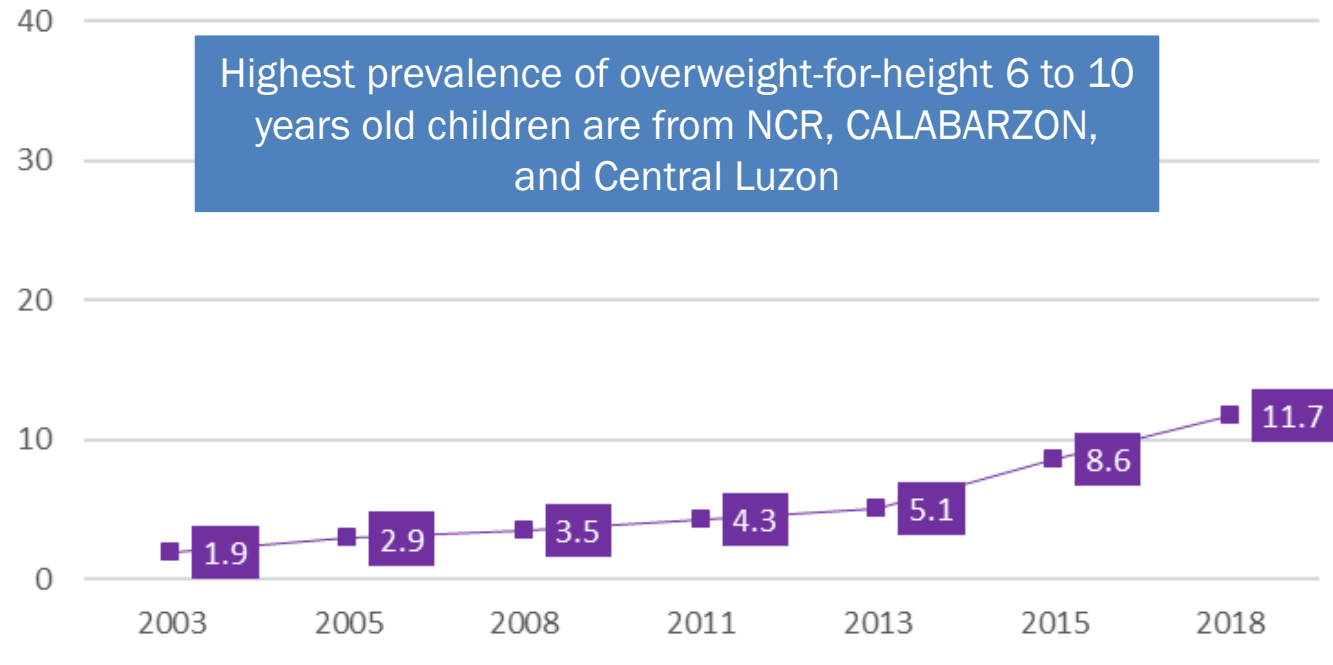
Anna Teresa O. Orillo, RND, MSc

Assistant Professor, University of the Philippines – Los Baños



Institute of Human Nutrition and Food
UPLB College of Human Ecology

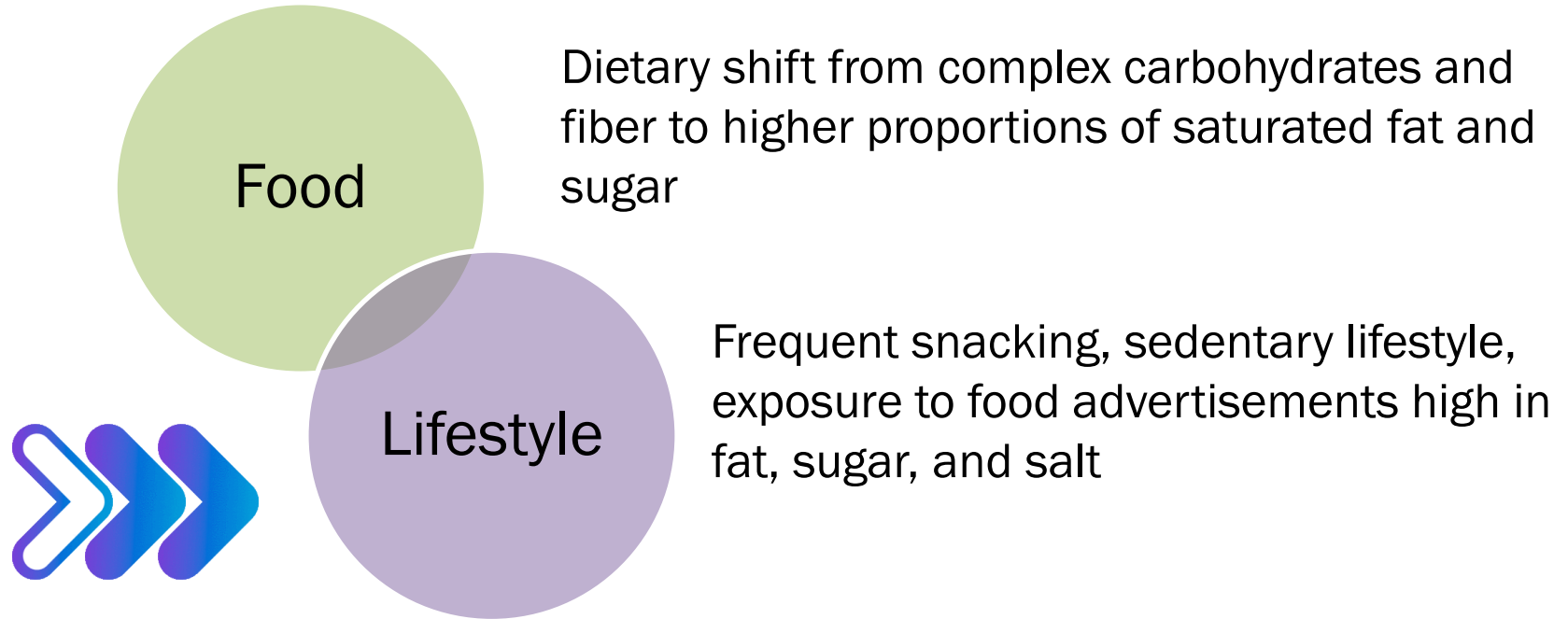
Trends in the prevalence of overweight-for-height among school children (6-10 years old): Philippines, 2003-2018



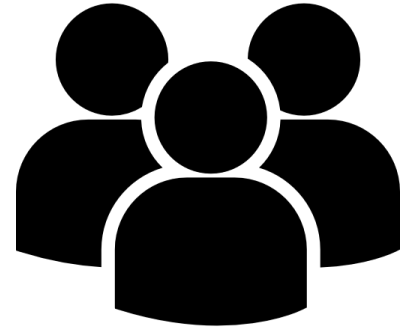
Source: FNRI-DOST, eNNS2018 (<https://www.fnri.dost.gov.ph>)



NUTRITION TRANSITION



Child consumer socialization is the process of acquiring skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their function as future consumers in the marketplace.



Research Objectives

To explore children's food habits, preferences, and their recall of food advertisements

1. Describe the food habits and food preferences of children, 6-7 and 9-10 years old;
2. Describe how children perceive nutrition in the context of food preferred and typically consumed; and to
3. Determine if recalled food advertisements reflect the food preferred and typically consumed.



Qualitative

Purposive Sampling

- 20 participants from a public school (6-7, 9-10)
- Household owns at least 1 television set; children were allowed to watch television

Semi-structured Interview Method

- Held in an empty classroom, without the parents and the teachers

Thematic Analysis

- 20 verbatim transcriptions = 8.3 hours audio recordings
- Coding categories developed *a priori*
- Data analyzed using NVIVO Starter version 11

Television Programs and Food Advertisements

- Validated by watching during the mentioned time slot and television channel



Profile of Participants

Age 6-7

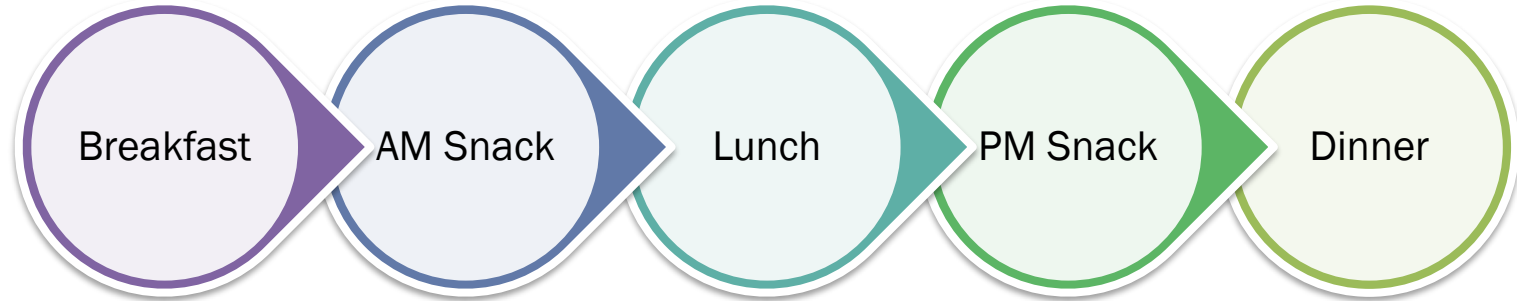
- Household size of 3 and 5
- Majority of the mothers are housewives
- All fathers employed

Age 9-10

- Household size of 5
- Half of the mothers are housewives
- All fathers employed



Typical Day's Fare



Breakfast: fried fish, egg, chicken, rice, processed food

Lunch and Dinner: “luto”

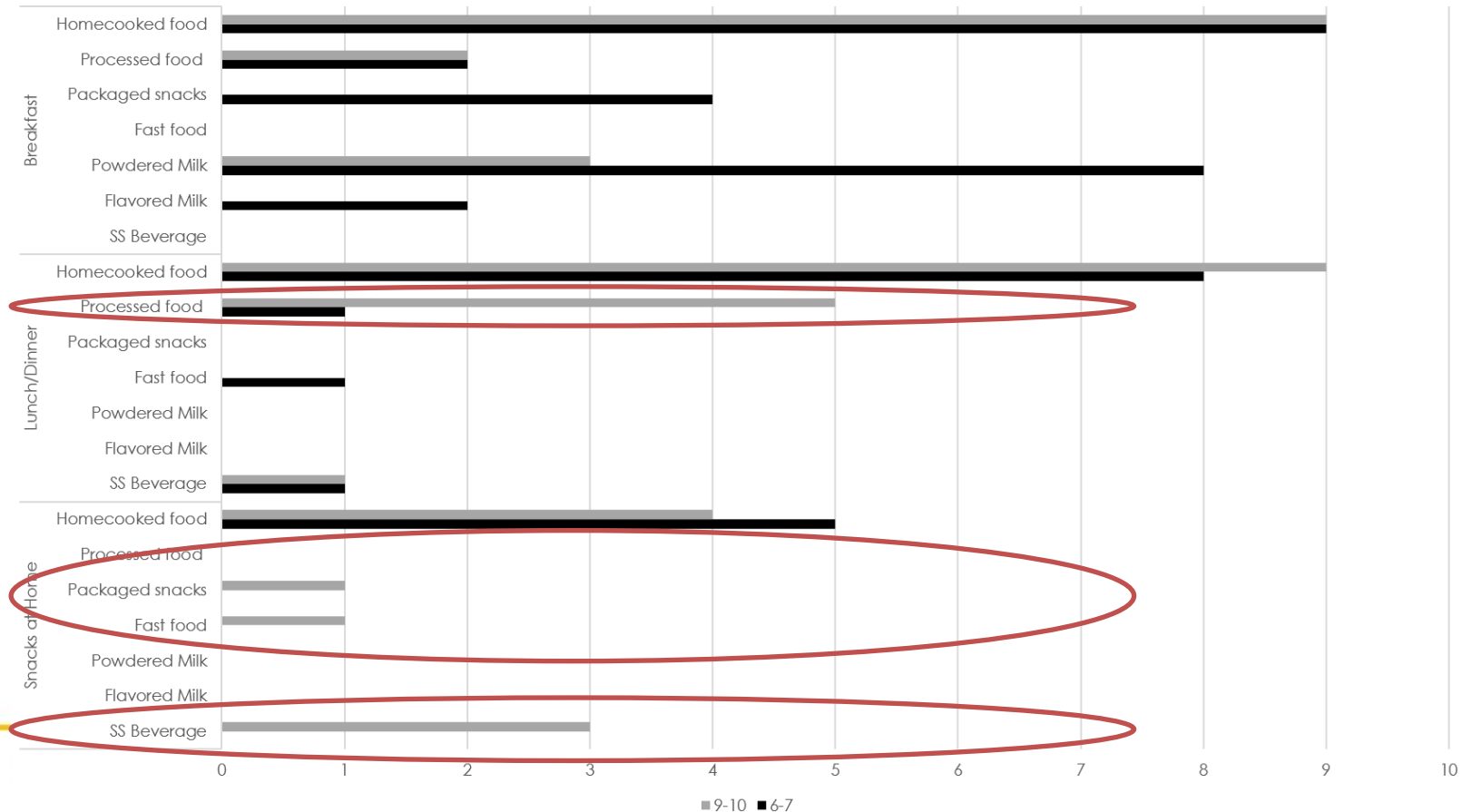
Snacks: plain bread and sandwich

6-7: drinks milk for breakfast

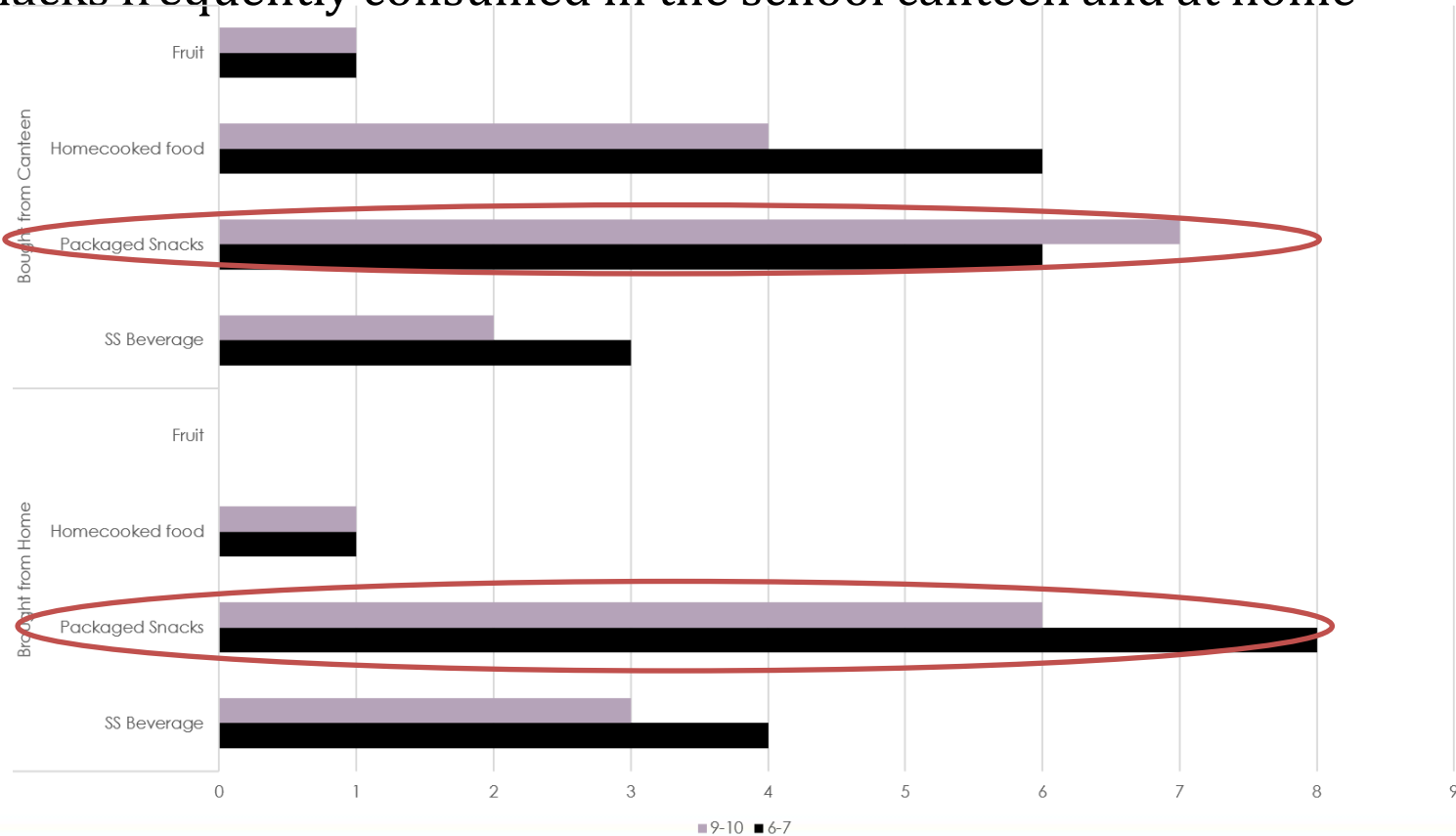
9-10: eats *sandwich* breakfast, *fries at burger* as snacks, and *processed food* for lunch and dinner



Food frequently consumed according to meal opportunity



Snacks frequently consumed in the school canteen and at home



Children's food likes

Age 6-7

- Vegetables
- Homecooked food
- Fruits
- Packaged snacks

Age 9-10

- Homecooked food
- Packaged snacks
- Sugar-sweetened beverages
- Fast-food

Reasons cited were related to **sensory attributes**, **method of food preparation**, and **influence of older family members**



Children's food dislikes

- **Sensory attributes specific to a food item:**
 - 6 to 7: yolk, *itlog na pula*, peanuts, cheese, squash, dinuguan
 - 9 to 10: bitter vegetables, star apple, durian, dinuguan
- **Health-related reasons:**
 - “*hindi makakabuti*” or because “*nagkakasakit*”; processed food, “*junk food*”, and candies
- **Perceived food composition:** as in hotdog and *kikiam*
- **Frequency of consumption:** “*nagsasawa na po ako*”
- **Associated to an experience:** turmeric as medicine



“Nagkasakit po kasi ako dati ng UTI at pneumonia [soft drinks]” –Female, 9

“Nagkasakit po ako. Naospital po ako. Dyabetes po [pineapple juice]” -Male, 6

“Yung hotdog daw gawa lang daw po yun sa bulate... kaya daw po siya pula [saw in YouTube].” -Female, 6

“Nakakabulate po [kikiam].” -Male, 7



Younger Children's Perception of Nutrition

- **Food examples** (no reason cited): fruits, vegetables, milk, bread, and potato
- **Physiologic need:** breakfast cereals can satisfy hunger; *“nakakabusog”*
- **Health:** soda, junk food, oil, chocolate, and candies were equated to not being nutritious, while salty food is believed to cause *“UTI”* and chocolates will cause tooth decay
- **Information from caregivers:** *“sabi po ni...”*; all of them learned from their parents; others from siblings, grandmother, older peers



Interviewer: Yung sinigang sa tingin mo masustansya?

Male, 10: (child hurriedly answers) Opo. Eh kasi po meron pong lahat po ng mga sangkap. Parang nandun na po, meron na pong gulay, meron pong mga karne, tapos po kapag po nilahok po yun sa kanin meron na pong Grow, Go at Glow po.



Interviewer: Eh yung itlog sa tingin mo masustansya?

Female, 6: Opo.

Interviewer: Paano mo nasabing masustansya?

Female, 6: Eh kasi po nakikita ko po sa tv lagi



***Interviewer:** Bakit sa tingin mo di siya masustansya kahit masarap siya? [leche flan as preferred food] (child pauses for a long time)*

***Female, 7:** Pwedeng mamatay (child whispering)*



Older Children's Perception of Nutrition

- **Health:** vegetables will help them grow faster, more active, and smarter; too much sugar can cause tooth decay and tonsillitis; salty food associated with “*sakit sa bato*”; too much fat was deemed bad for the health.
- **Food safety:** fast food was regarded as “*malinis*”
- **Nutrient composition:** vegetables as a source of vitamins and minerals; complex dishes representative of Go, Grow, Glow food
- **Moderation:** fast food favored only when eaten in moderation



Recall of Food Advertisements

	Age 6 to 7	Age 9 to 10
Total no. of food ads recalled	n=18	n=27
Preferred and frequently eaten food with recalled ad	14(78%)	21(78%)
Food ad recalled with TV program	1(6%)	4(15%)
Salient features recalled	Storyline Quoted script	Product description Celebrity endorser Gist



Salient features recalled

Age 6 to 7	Age 9 to 10
Better at recalling those that associate the product with fun or appeals to the emotions	Better at recalling product-relevant information
<i>“hinabol po niya yung baka”</i> <i>“nandun po sila sa boat”</i> <i>“naging artista siya”</i> <i>“nagtumbling”</i> <i>“nagpapicture siya”</i> <i>“hinalikan ng mommy”</i> <i>“nag-iikot ikot po... nagkadikit sila”</i>	<i>“kumakain ng [hotdog brand]”</i> <i>“madami pong flavor”</i> <i>“yung gatas po na chocomilk”</i> <i>“chicken po tapos may spaghetti”</i> <i>“yung giniling na may mushroom”</i> <i>“yung [chocolate brand] color brown”</i> <i>“yung chocolate po na dinidrizzle”</i>



Key Findings

Food Preference and Perception on Nutrition

- Determined by **biological, social, economic, physical, and cultural** aspects.
- **Knowledge on nutrition does not guarantee informed food choice.** Children from both age groups were able to recognize that some of their disliked food are actually nutritious.
- **Autonomy** and a more **accommodative approach** among parents diversify food preference.

Children's Cognitive Abilities

- **Education and cognitive ability** of children enable them to make sense of food attributes, including nutrition and information from food advertisements.
- Recall of food ads is facilitated by **age-dependent information processing.**
- By **mere exposure**, watching food ads contribute to familiarity that enable easier recall.



Key Findings

Child Socialization

- **Social learning** enable knowledge transfer and create shared experiences that reinforce or deter inherent liking for food.
- **Family** remains to be a relevant source of information
- **Modeling** facilitates food consumption as the children are more likely to eat what they see being eaten by adults.

Implications for Future Research

- Family communication and parenting styles can be explored to describe how Filipino family structures influence household decision-making when it comes to food.
- Quantitative, i.e., correlational and experimental research designs may be used.
- It is recommended that parent-child dyads be interviewed to validate the self-reports.
- Other study sites may be further explored to describe patterns across various contexts



Thank you.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to my professor, co-author, and research mentor from the Department of Psychology at U.P. Diliman - **Prof. Jay A. Yacat**

