An examination of parental attitudes toward children's advergaming: A parental socialization perspective.

Nathan Joseph Evans
University of Tennessee - Knoxville, nevans4@utk.edu

Recommended Citation
https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gradthes/705
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Nathan Joseph Evans entitled "An examination of parental attitudes toward children's advergaming: A parental socialization perspective..." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communication and Information.

Mariea G. Hoy, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Ronald Taylor, John Eric Haley

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Nathanial Joseph Evans entitled “An Examination of Parental Attitudes Toward Children’s Advergaming: A Parental Socialization Perspective.” I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science with a major in Communications and Information.

Mariela Grubbs Hoy  
Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Ronald Taylor

John Eric Haley

Accepted for the Council

Carolyn R. Hodges  
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file in official student records)
An Examination of Parental Attitudes Toward Children's Advergaming: A Parental Socialization Perspective

A Thesis Presented for the Masters of Science Degree
The University of Tennessee

Nathaniel Joseph Evans
August 2010
DEDICATION

For my mother, my father, and my entire family.

Your support has never gone unnoticed.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the advertising and public relations department for showing your support through this whole process. Special thanks to Dr. Hoy, Dr. Taylor, and Dr. Haley. Your support and belief truly helped me accomplish this thesis over the summer. Dr. Les Carlson at the University of Lincoln Nebraska was an integral part of this whole process. Your feedback and expertise guided me through some of the harder parts. Thank you all.
ABSTRACT

Every passing year is witness to increases in Internet use among younger populations. The amount of time spent online among children ages two to 11 is increasing at a faster rate than that of the entire online population. The rise in Internet use among children has resulted in marketing and advertising efforts aimed at increasing brand awareness, involvement and immersion. The use of branded entertainment and advergames is a popular practice when attempting to increase brand awareness and loyalty among children. Advergames offer a combination of entertainment and advertising that are designed to appeal to younger populations that have difficulty distinguishing persuasive messages from entertainment content. Past research on parental attitudes towards children’s television advertising indicates parenting style influences subsequent attitudes towards advertisements. The purpose of this study, utilizing parental socialization theory, examines parenting style and how it affects attitudes towards children’s advergaming. This study analyzes results from a nationwide online survey (N=214) and examines differences between authoritarian, authoritative, neglecting, and indulgent parents in their attitudes towards children’s advergaming. Findings indicate that differences in attitudes towards advergaming do exist among the four parenting styles in the hypothesized direction yet these differences were not significant. Future research should look beyond parenting style as an exponent for attitudes toward children’s advergames.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction__ p. 1

Background__ p. 3
  Children Online__ p. 3
  Marketers’ Responses to Children Online__ p. 4
  Advergaming__ p. 5
  Content Analysis of Advergaming__ p. 5
  Children’s reactions to Advergames__ p. 7

Literature Review__ p. 8
  Child Development__ p. 8
  Parental Concern of Advertising__ p. 9
  Consumer Socialization__ p. 10
  Parental Socialization__ p. 10
  Parenting Styles__ p. 11
  Parent’s Attitudes Toward Children’s Ads__ p. 13

Method__ p. 15
  Parental Understanding of Advergaming__ p. 15
  Phase I: Qualitative Interviews__ p. 15
  Phase II: Quantitative Examination of Advergaming Definition__ p. 17
  Independent Variable: Parenting Styles__ p. 18
  Dependent Variable: Parental Attitudes Toward Advergaming__ p. 22

Results__ p. 24
  ANOVA Results__ p. 25

Discussion and Limitations__ p. 27

References__ p. 33

Appendices__ p. 40

Vita__ p. 50
**INTRODUCTION**

Since 2004, the number of children between the ages of 2 and 11 online has increased 18 percent, as compared to 10% of the total active universe that is online (Nielsen, 2009). In 2009 children aged 2-11 comprised nearly 16 million, or 9.5% of the active online universe (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). The time spent online among children ages 2-11 has increased 63% in the past five years, from seven hours in May 2004 to more than 11 hours online in May 2009. This time spent online outpaced the increase in online usage among the total population which increased only 36% (Nielsen, 2009). Children ages 5-14 participate in a wide variety of activities online. Based off a nationally representative sample of more than 800,000 children aged 5-9, a National Center for Education Statistics survey found that 33.5% of these children e-mail or instant message and more than 64% of them play online games (NCES, 2005).

The Internet provides opportunities for advertisers to develop brand awareness, involvement and immersion (Goetzl, 2006). Current spending for children’s online advertising appears to be growing in the branded entertainment arena (O’Guinn, Allen, & Semenick, 2006). Big media players such as Young & Rubicam and Starcom Media launched videogame divisions to serve marketing desires to develop new forms of online media that will reach potential young consumers in unique and compelling ways (Moore, 2006). For example, Sheilds (2005) found it to be a popular practice for big corporations such as Nickelodeon, Frito-Lay, Disney, Post and Kraft, to employ interactive media online for the purposes of promoting brand awareness to children. These immersive and interactive games are commonly referred to as advergames. Advergames are online games in which a
company’s product or brand characters are featured. A firm creates them for the explicit purpose of promoting one or more of its brands to both children and adults (Moore, 2006).

Past research indicates that parents are concerned with the effects advertising can have on their children. One of the biggest objections to marketers’ advertising to children stems from the belief that advertisements undermine parents’ authority to shape a child’s values and behaviors (Grossbart & Crosby, 1984). In other words, advertising can socialize children on how to be consumers in today’s marketplace. Accordingly, parents rather than advertisers wish to be one of the main socializing agents for teaching their child how to be consumers. Ward (1974) defines consumer socialization as “the process by which young people acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the marketplace” (p. 2). The degree to which this process is a result of age, a child’s family environment, exposure to advertising, peer exposure, or school environment is up for debate.

Consumer socialization research has been tied to theories of family communication such as the typology of family communication patterns (e.g., Moore & Moschis, 1981) and the typology of parental socialization types (e.g. Baumrind, 1980). Much like consumer socialization, parental socialization is an adult-initiated process in which children are guided to develop habits and values that are parallel with their culture. According to this theory, parents differ in how they rear their child and these differences are reflected through a typology of four parental socialization styles: authoritarian, authoritative, neglecting, and indulgent (Baumrind, 1991). Previous research has established a link between the type of parenting style one utilizes and his or her attitude of varying forms of
children’s advertising (Walsh, Lacznia, & Carlson, 1998; Carlson, Lacznia, & Muehling, 1994; Bakir & Vitell, 2010; Crosby & Grossbart, 1984; Lacznia, Muehling, & Carlson, 1995; Tanner, Carlson, Raymond, & Hopkins, 2008). To date, no research has attempted to understand parental perceptions and attitudes of Internet advertising directed at children.

The purpose of this study seeks to fill the new media gap by examining parental attitudes of advergaming directed at children. The current study utilizes parental socialization theory (Baumrind, 1971) and seeks to determine the relationship between parenting styles and parental attitudes toward advergaming directed at children.

**BACKGROUND**

**Children Online**

Children represent a growing online market for advertisers. According to a 2008 Mediamark Research and Intelligence survey, approximately 40% of children ages 6-11 visited a website they heard or saw following exposure to a commercial or advertisement (eMarketer, 2008). These children represent 10.7 million young consumers online. More than 25% of them were ages 6-7, 33% were ages 8-9 and over 40% were ages 10-11 (eMarketer, 2008). In 2009, children ages 2-11 represented 16 million young consumers (Nielsen, 2009). Children are spending more time online every year and have outpaced the overall population’s Internet use as well (Nielsen, 2009).

According to a NCES (2005) survey, 17.3% of children ages 5-9 purchase products online, and 16.6% look at the news, weather, and sports online. Sixty-two percent of children ages 10-14 e-mail and message, 66.1% play games online, 34.4% purchase products, and 35.7% look at the news, weather, and sports online.
Marketers’ Responses to Children Online

Moore and Rideout (2007) indicate the Internet to be a highly attractive medium due to its captivating nature. It has the ability to sustain long periods of attention and involvement because it is an interactive medium that can hold a child's attention for more than just 30 seconds. Sean Black, senior vice president and managing group director at MediaCom’s Beyond Entertainment said, “targeting kids who have been online since they were old enough to click a mouse warrants a far more interactive marketing approach. Therefore, kids’ online advertising generally takes the form of immersive games and contests, which are built around brands and their characters” (Shields, 2005, p. 4). It is a popular practice for big corporations like Nickelodeon, Frito-Lay, Disney, Post and Kraft, to employ interactive media online for the purposes of promoting brand awareness to kids (Shields, 2005).

Expenditures for online advertising have increased steadily over the years. According to a Research and Markets report (2009), expenditures for online advertising in Western Europe and North America reached $35 billion in 2008. EMarketer (2009) indicates the Internet’s total share of media spending is rising by at least one percentage point every year. In 2010, with the economic crisis easing up, a 9.4 percentage increase is expected. Online advertising is a growing revenue stream for child and teen virtual worlds as well, with products being integrated as much as possible. A virtual world is a genre of online community that often takes the form of a computer-based simulated environment, through which users can interact with one another and use and create objects (Bishop, 2009). For example, Parks Associates estimated in June 2007 that $15 million was spent
advertising in virtual worlds in the U.S. and projected that it would rise tenfold to $150 million by 2012 (eMarketer, 2007). According to a 2006 Congressional Testimony report on children’s food and beverage producers, the Internet, new media, digital media, and viral marketing represented five percent of all youth-directed expenditures which was estimated at $77 million (FTC, 2008). Yankee Group estimated total U.S. spending on in-game advertising and advergaming to be more than $185 million in 2004. Advergaming was estimated to account for more than 70% of that spending (mediaedge:cia, 2005)

**Advergaming**

Advergames are a type of branded entertainment that feature advertising messages, logos, and trade characters in a game format typically found online. Although they can refer to any game format they are most commonly found in electronic format (Moore, 2006). Advergames allow a participant virtual interaction with a product or a specific brand (Arnold, 2004). Kretchmer (2004) suggests that the advent of advergaming was in part a response to lower than normal click-through rates of normal banner advertisements online. Advergames offer a combination of entertainment and engagement that produces strong emotional connections between the brand and the game (Dahl, Eagle, & Baez, 2008). This combination produces a highly involving environment for children in which they are encouraged to return. In fact many of the games promote repeat playing, offer multiple levels of play, or suggest other games the visitor might enjoy (Moore, 2006).

**Content Analysis of Advergaming**

Advergames’ pervasiveness was found in a 2007 analysis of online food marketing. Moore and Rideout (2007) examined corporate websites that advertised to children. Out of
the 77 websites and 4000 web pages, 73% contained one or more advergames on their website. The number of games on the websites ranged from one to 60 with a total of 546 games out of all the websites in the study (Moore & Rideout, 2007). The same study found that (85%) of the top food brands that target children through television advertising also use branded websites to market to children online (Moore & Rideout, 2007). According to Nieslen/Net Ratings, these sites received more than 12.2 million visits from children ages 2-11 in the second quarter of 2005 (Moore, 2006).

Lee and Youn (2008) examined 100 leading companies and found 26 that used advergames on their websites. Among the 26 companies that used advergames on their websites, they found 294 branded advergames that integrated either a product or a brand name inside the game. They found that 40% embedded the brand name or logo in the game and 8% of advergames embedded only the product. About half of advergames, or 44%, embedded both the product and brand name as an essential element of the game (Lee & Youn, 2008). Thirty-five percent of the advergames encouraged the players to pass along the game to friends via e-mail or by word of mouth. Twenty-three percent allowed the player to customize the advergames by letting them choose their preferred options. They found the most prevalent advergame genres were arcades (29%), puzzles (25%), quizzes/trivia (16%), sports (10%), racing games (7%), action games (3%), adventure games (2%), and simulation games (2%) (Lee & Youn, 2008). The authors also examined the function of the advergames and found that the majority (59%) gave consumers an opportunity to play with the brands while 28% of the advergames entertained them for the sake of fun (Lee and Youn, 2008).
**Children's reactions to advergames**

The majority of research on attitudes of advergaming focuses on adults and adolescents (Hernandez, et al., 2004; Lee & Faber, 2007; Nelson, 2002; Nelson, Keum, & Yaros, 2004; Nelson, Yaros, & Keum, 2006; Nicovich, 2005; Schneider & Cornwell, 2005). Little research exists concerning children's reaction and attitudes of advergames.

Mallinckrodt and Mizerski (2007) examined the effects of playing advergames on young children's perceptions, preferences, and requests. In terms of the perceived healthiness of an advertised product (Froot Loops advergame) the majority of children (83%) correctly identified Froot Loops as being less healthy than fresh fruit. They discovered children who were exposed to the Froot Loops advergame significantly preferred Froot Loops to other cereals and other food categories, such as cheeseburgers, fruit salads, and sandwiches, when compared to children who were not exposed to the advergame (Mallinckrodt & Mizerski, 2007). In terms of generating requests for purchase, Mallinckrodt and Mizerski (2007) found no support for an advergame generating more requests to get the brand from children playing the game, compared with children not playing the game. They found that only 25% of the children exposed to the game correctly identified the game's sponsor by circling a drawing of the Kellogg's Froot Loops logo. This ability to perceive the source and intentions of an advergame was positively associated with age (Mallinckrodt and Mizerski, 2007). Children's knowledge of persuasive intent was assumed to have a negative effect on their preferences for Froot Loops. Their results failed to support this notion and they found children who were able to identify
persuasive intent were more likely to prefer Froot Loops to other cereals and food options (Mallinckrodt and Mizerski, 2007).

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

*Child Development*

The merging of entertainment and persuasive messages creates an interesting dilemma for vulnerable populations such as children. John (1999) suggests that children of different ages have differing abilities to discern entertainment content from commercial content. For example, children between the ages of three and seven are characterized by an orientation toward the readily observable perceptual features of a marketplace. They have an inability to discern others’ perspectives due to their own egocentrism and as a corollary, have little idea what persuasion is. Logically, this age group would be the most vulnerable to persuasion and brand immersion. On the other hand, children between the ages of seven and 11 signify a shift from perceptual thought processes to symbolic thought processes. This results in a better understanding of the market place and in turn, a better understanding of advertisers’ persuasive intent, entertainment content and commercial content (John, 1999).

Research suggests that children ages eight and above have developed satisfactory cognitive defenses in order to have enough skepticism and knowledge about advertising’s persuasive intent that they can respond in a mature and informed manner (John, 1999). However, research has found that these cognitive defenses actually do little to affect evaluations of preferred products in advertising (Christenson, 1982; Ross et al., 1984). The absence of discerning responses to advertising in light of developing knowledge about
advertising may be a result of the child’s inability to quell their excitement over an advertised product or brand. A second explanation for the absence of defense responses is that children’s advertising knowledge may serve as a cognitive defense of advertising only when activated and accessed during the viewing of an ad (John, 1999). Because the effects of persuasion on children between the ages of seven and 11 are debated and the current research has mixed outcomes, further research on parental attitudes towards advergaming directed at children between the ages of seven and 11 is needed.

**Parental Concern of Advertising**

With such resources and strategy shifting towards the use of online branded entertainment for children, it would make sense to find parental concern following close behind. A U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops study examined the concerns of parents of 2-14 year olds on media effects upon children (USCCB, 2010). Although there was no specific mention of types of advertising (i.e. advergaming), parents were more concerned about the inappropriate content on television and the Internet than they were about video games, cell phones or music. More than 80% of parents expressed that they wanted to control their children’s access to violence, sex, profanity and explicit drug use (USCCB, 2010).

Nonetheless, past research indicated that parents were concerned with the effects advertising can have on their children. For example, one of the biggest objections to the use of children’s advertising stems from the belief that advertisements undermine a parent’s authority to shape their child’s values and behaviors (Grossbart & Crosby, 1984). According to this finding, parents wish to be one of, if not the main, socializing agent in their child’s life.
**Consumer Socialization**

One concept that rests at the center of this study is the idea that all children to some degree are socialized to be consumers. Ward (1974) defines consumer socialization as “the process by which young people acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the marketplace” (p. 2). John (1999) suggests that future steps in consumer socialization theory need to include social aspects, none more important than the family. Consumer socialization research has been tied to theories of family communication such as the typology of family communication patterns (e.g. Moore and Moschis, 1981) and the typology of parental socialization types (e.g. Baumrind, 1980).

**Parental Socialization**

Parental socialization is an adult initiated process in which children are guided to develop habits and values that are parallel with their culture (Baumrind, 1980). This process explains the way in which children learn according to interactional processes with parents. In this manner, parental socialization is not a one-way process. It is dependent upon the interaction experienced by both the child and parent. Past research indicates parental socialization is tied to social learning theory (Bandura & Walters, 1963) in that it requires an agent to model off of as well as an actor who provides feedback. Parents influence the development of their children by serving as role models.

Parental socialization is in large part based off of the parent’s receptivity to the child’s views and needs. This type of socialization is also based on the degree of communication experienced between the parent and child (Carlson, Laczniaik, & Muehling, 1994). Therefore, this line of research asks whether parental socialization significantly
contributes to the formation of parental attitudes towards children's advergaming. Furthermore, it is imperative to consider how different parenting styles affect the formation of attitudes.

**Parenting Styles**

Baumrind's (1971) earlier research indicated three main subtypes of parental behavioral patterns: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. The most commonly employed dimensions of parenting style used to define the four patterns are warmth versus hostility and restrictiveness versus permissiveness (Walsh, Laczniak, & Carlson, 1998; Carlsen & Tanner, 2006). The first dimension of warmth versus hostility is defined by the extent to which parents share feelings and express affection with their children and discourage children from raising issues that trouble them (Carlson & Tanner, 2006). The second dimension of permissiveness versus restrictiveness is defined by the degree to which parents value children conforming to the policies and expectations of others, are firm in enforcing rules, support the non-equal status of children, and are strict with their children (Carlson & Tanner, 2006).

The authoritarian parent attempts to shape, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set standard of conduct, usually an absolute standard, theologically motivated and formulated by a higher authority. Authoritarian parents are more restrictive than both permissive and authoritative parents and typically score lower in terms of warmth. They maintain high levels of control over their children and attempt to keep verbal exchanges to a minimum. Furthermore, children of authoritarian parents are expected to obey without questioning their authority (Walsh,

Authoritative parents, on the other hand, attempt to direct the child’s activities but in a rational, issue-oriented manner. They encourage verbal give and take, and share with the child the reasoning behind their policy (Baumrind, 1971). In comparison with authoritarian parents, authoritatives typically work to balance their child’s rights and responsibilities. They are warmer than authoritarians, they encourage self-expression, but they also expect children to act in a mature manner while adhering to family rules (Gardner, 1982; Baumrind, 1968; Walsh, Lacziak, & Carlson, 1998).

The permissive parent attempts to behave in a non-punitive, acceptant, and affirmative manner toward the child’s impulses, desires, and actions. They consult with their children about policy decisions and give explanations for family rules. They make few demands for household responsibility and orderly behavior. They present themselves to the child as a resource, not as an active agent responsible for shaping or altering his ongoing or future behavior. They allow the child to regulate his or her own activities and avoid the exercise of control (Baumrind, 1971).

Later work by Baumrind (1991) split the permissive parenting style to include both neglecting and indulgent parenting styles. Neglecting parents are more detached from their children. They are low in restrictiveness and warmth. They do not supervise or promote children’s self-directed development (Walsh, Lacziak, & Carlson, 1998). Parents who are classified as neglecting have been shown to have little influence in the socialization process which may lead their children to be influenced by outside consumer socialization agents
such as peer groups, teachers, and media including varying forms of advertising (Walsh, Lacziak, & Carlson, 1998).

Indulgent parents tend to be more permissive than restrictive and warm rather than cold when interacting with their children (Walsh, Lacziak, & Carlson, 1998). Indulgent parents try to remove outside constraints without endangering the welfare of their child. Furthermore, Indulgent parents provide their child with adult rights but not adult responsibilities (Baumrind, 1978).

**Parent’s Attitudes toward Children’s Ads**

Prior research on parental attitudes of children’s advertising has revealed significant relationships between the classification of one’s parenting style and the value a parent assigns to the advertising in question (Bakir & Vitell, 2010; Carlson, Lacziak, & Muehling, 1994; Crosby & Grossbart, 1984; and Grossbart & Crosby, 1984). For example, Carlson, Lacziak, and Muehling (1994) conducted research on parental concerns of toy-based programming. They found that authoritatives held more negative views towards toy-based programming than neglecting parents. They found that authoritarians and authoritatives did not significantly differ in their attitudes of toy-based programming (Carlson, Lacziak, & Muehling, 1994).

Research by Crosby and Grossbart (1984) focused on parental style segments and how it related to attitudes toward children’s food advertising. Their results indicated a significant difference in attitudes between authoritative and permissive parents, with authoritatives holding more negative views toward children’s food advertising. However, no significant differences were found between authoritative and authoritarian parents.
Research by Laczniak, Muehling, and Carlson (1995) looked at attitudes of 900-number advertising directed at children. Their results revealed that mothers, regardless of their parental style, all held negative attitudes toward 900-number advertising. Compared to other types of advertising such as toy-based and food advertising, parental attitudes toward 900-number advertising were consistently lower.

Based on the relationships found between parenting styles and concern about food and toy-based advertising, authoritatives consistently held more negative attitudes towards children’s advertising then both neglecting and indulgent parents. Thus, with respect to the current study, the following hypotheses are generated:

\textit{H1a: Authoritative parents are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward advergames directed at children than indulgent parents do.}

\textit{H1b: Authoritative parents are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward advergames directed at children than neglecting parents do.}

Prior research indicated no significant differences among authoritative and authoritarian parents with regard to their concern of food-based, toy-based and 900-number based advertising directed at children (Carlson, Laczniak, & Muehling, 1994; Crosby and Grossbart, 1984; Laczniak, Muehling, and Carlson, 1995; Walsh et al.,1998). Based off the similarities between authoritarian and authoritative parents, authoritarians may hold more negative attitudes toward advergames directed at children than both neglecting and indulgent parents. The following hypotheses are generated to test for these differences:
H2a: Authoritarian parents are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward advergames directed at children than indulgent parents do.

H2b: Authoritarian parents are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward advergames directed at children than neglecting parents do.

METHOD

To address these hypotheses, a self-administered online survey was given to a diverse sample of parents of children aged seven to 11. E-Rewards.com was hired by the researcher to locate representative participants and to administer the instrument. E-Rewards.com is an online opinion panel that recruits and compensates members for survey participation. Parents were asked to complete the survey with respect to their youngest child between the ages of seven and 11 and indicate this child’s age.

Parental Understanding of Advergaming

In order to ascertain parents’ understanding of advergaming, two initial phases were conducted to aid in the survey development: 1) Qualitative interviews concerning advergaming and 2) Quantitative examinations using an operationalized definition of advergaming.

Phase I: Qualitative Interviews

Six individual interviews with parents (4 males and 2 females) were used to gain insight into parents’ understanding of advergaming as well as their awareness of their children’s exposure to advergaming. Several guided questions were used to gain insight into parents’ awareness of their child’s online activities (See Appendix A). This determined a baseline of parents’ knowledge of online gaming with a specific focus on advergaming. A
definition of advergaming, as well as a link to an advergame was provided when participants were unable to correctly identify and describe what an advergame was. The definition of advergaming was based on descriptions from Moore (2006) and Dahl et al. (2008). Following the discussion of child activities online, each participant was presented with a definition of advergaming (See Appendix A). The researcher instructed each participant to carefully read through the definition and then instructed him or her to change or add anything they felt necessary.

All six respondents indicated they were unaware of the term “advergaming” and did not know what it meant. After presenting each participant with an example of an advergame (e.g. Oreo Double Stuff Racing League advergame) parents indicated that their children play online games similar to the Oreo advergame although no parent stated that his or her child had played this specific Oreo advergame. Parents were aware of their children’s activities on sites that featured characters most commonly found in cartoons and shows on Cartoon Network. Examples of shows included Kung Fu Panda, Teen Titans and iCarly. According to parents’ responses, these shows all had websites that their children were directed to following exposure to the show itself. Within these websites, parents reported their children played a variety of online games that had several themes with the most common being the accrual of points and progression through multiple levels.

Responses to the proposed modification of the given advergaming definition received no support among all participants. Participants indicated they felt it was a satisfactory definition and would not change anything. Therefore, the operational definition of advergaming is as follows:
“Advergames are a type of branded entertainment that feature advertising messages, logos, and trade characters. They are typically found online and allow virtual interaction with a product or brand. Advergames offer a combination of entertainment and advertising that can create an emotional connection between the brand and a game. These games encourage children to return by offering them multiple levels of play, repeat playing opportunities and suggestions for other games”.

**Phase II: Quantitative Examination of Advergaming Definition**

After implementing insight gained by the individual interviews, the advergaming definition was quantitatively pre-tested with 20 qualifying respondents. In order to test the applicability of the advergaming definition, a slideshow was created on PowerPoint. Six screen shots of websites containing child-themed material were captured and arranged randomly in order to prevent response bias. These web captures included a McDonald’s Nutrition website, a Scholastic.com website, a Sponge Bob website, an Oreo website, a Hasbro.com website, and a Walt Disney World website. Two of the six web captures represented advergames (e.g. Oreo Double Stuff Racing League advergame and a Sponge Bob Square Pants advergame). The remaining four web captures did not qualify as advergames. The order of the two advergame website captures were determined by a roll of a die to create 20 unique versions of the slideshow. A convenience sample of twenty parents of children ages seven to 11 were asked to participate in a short survey on parents’ attitudes of children’s Internet advertising. The survey presented the definition of an advergame developed from the individual interviews as well as directions for the pretest (See appendix B). Each respondent watched the Power Point presentation and indicated whether he or she thought the web capture qualified as an advergame.

There were a total of 40 possible correct advergame identifications among the entire pre-test sample (two advergames in each slideshow for each of the 20 participants).
Nineteen of the 20 participants correctly identified both advergames in each of their slideshows. One participant identified one out of two correct advergames in their slideshow. In total, there were 39 correct identifications of advergames out of a possible 40 (97.5%). Thus, this definition of advergaming was deemed suitable for presentation to the parents on the final survey prior to asking advergaming related questions.

**Independent Variable: Parenting Styles**

**Assessment**

The first section of the instrument (Attitudes of Parenting) (see appendix C) consisted of previous measures of parenting orientation dimensions developed and utilized by Schaefer and Bell (1958), Baumrind (1971), Carlson, Laczniak, and Muehling, (1994), Walsh et al. (1998), and Carlson and Tanner (2006) (Personal email correspondence: Carlson, 2010). The four parenting styles were represented by a two-dimensional model that was developed and documented in previous research (Walsh et al., 1998; Carlson & Tanner, 2006). The two parenting dimensions used to define the four parenting styles are warmth versus hostility and permissiveness versus restrictiveness. Previous work by Walsh et al. (1998) and Carlson and Tanner (2006) demonstrated the warmth versus hostility dimension to be captured by three indicators: parents’ willingness to listen and share feelings and experiences with children (nurturance); parents’ tendencies to discourage children from discussing child trouble with parents (avoiding communication); and parents’ encouragement to have their children talk to them about problems and issues (encouragement of verbalization).
The second dimension of permissiveness versus restrictiveness has been captured by four indicators: the degree to which parents hold their children to values and rule conformity (values conformity); parents’ recognition of the non-equal status of children (authoritarian); parents’ endorsement of children obeying the rules outside the home (strictness); and parents’ perception that their attempts at discipline are very unyielding (firm enforcement) (Carlson, Laczniak, and Muehling, 1994; Walsh et al., 1998; Carlson and Tanner, 2006).

Factor analysis was conducted in order to determine the formation of the indicators within each of the dimensions (table 1). Five of the seven indicators were determined to have acceptable levels of internal consistency well above the .70 criteria established by Nunnally (1978).

Social Desirability Assessment

All independent measurement items used a 5-point Likert scale format (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). Previous research has addressed the issue of socially desirable parental responses since all independent items are self-reported. Previous studies incorporating independent measures of parental styles and measures of social desirability have shown the two to be uncorrelated (Carlson & Tanner, 2006; Walsh et al., 1998;). The aforementioned study by Walsh et al. (1998) incorporated Crowne and Marlow’s (1964) social desirability scale. Crowne and Marlow’s (1964) original scale
Table 1
Independent Variables: Indicators of Parental Style Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Style Dimensions and Indicators</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restrictiveness vs. Permissiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values Conformity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>sa/sd</td>
<td>.709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm Enforcement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>sa/sd</td>
<td>.775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>sa/sd</td>
<td>.790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strictness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>sa/sd</td>
<td>.460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warmth vs. Hostility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>sa/sd</td>
<td>.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging Verbalization</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>sa/sd</td>
<td>.615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance of Communication</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>sa/sd</td>
<td>.798</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale = All scales are Likert 5-point strongly agree/strongly disagree

included 33 items and maintained a high internal consistency coefficient (\( \alpha = .88 \)). In order to maintain a balanced scale, 18 of the 33 items were coded as true and 15 as false. Walsh et al. (1998) utilized 10 of the original 33 items, five of which were coded as true and five of which were coded as false. The finalized instrument utilizes six questions (found under the section titled “Additional Questions About You”) from the original 33 items of the Crowne and Marlow (1964) scale in order to test for correlations of socially desirable responses and parental styles. Of these six questions, three are coded as true and three are coded as false in order to maintain a proper balance to the scale. The social desirability scale was not significantly correlated with the independent measure of permissiveness vs. restrictiveness (permissiveness with SD=-.083, p=.228) but was significantly correlated with the independent measure of warmth vs. hostility (warmth with SD=-.152, p=.026).
Categorization

Categorizations of parental styles depended on median scores for the warmth versus hostility and permissiveness versus restrictiveness dimensions seen in figure 1. The resulting four parental styles fell within one of four quadrants. Parents that scored above the median for both the warmth versus hostility and permissiveness versus restrictiveness dimensions were classified as authoritative (N=40). Parents that scored below the median for both dimensions were classified as neglecting (N=46). Parents that scored below the median on the warmth versus hostility dimension and above the median on the permissiveness versus restrictiveness dimension were classified as authoritarian (N=48). Parents that scored above the median on the warmth versus hostility dimension but below the median on the permissiveness versus restrictiveness dimension were classified as indulgent (N=42) (e.g., Walsh et al., 1998; Carlson and Tanner, 2006).
**Dependent Variable: Parental Attitudes Toward Advergaming**

Prior to answering advergaming related questions, parents were presented with the operationalized advergaming definition and two examples used in the survey development. This section is composed of 15 questions adapted from varying sources (see appendix C). Four items in this section are adapted from a scale developed by Crosby and Grossbart (1984) that measured parental attitudes of food advertising directed at children. Original items included the following: ‘There is too much food advertising directed at children’; ‘Advertisers use tricks and gimmicks to get children to buy their products’; ‘Advertising teaches children bad eating habits’; and ‘Advertising directed at children leads to family conflict’. The original scale in Crosby and Grossbart’s (1984) study maintained strong internal consistency (α = .813). These items were adapted to include advergaming directed at children rather than food advertising. Items used a 5-point Likert scale format (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). These items maintained an alpha coefficient of .625 in the current study.

An additional question that determined parental attitudes toward advergaming (see appendix C) utilized a scale developed by Wolin, Korgaomkar, and Lund (2002) that measured attitudes toward web advertising. The scale specifically addressed attitudes of materialism which Pollay and Mittal (1993) define as a set of beliefs which views consumption as the route to all satisfactions. The original scale in Wolin et al. (2002) included the following: ‘Web advertising makes you buy things you do not really need’; ‘Web advertising increases dissatisfaction among children by showing products they can’t afford’;
'Web advertising is making children materialistic – interested in buying and owning things'; and 'Web advertising makes children buy unaffordable products just to show off'. The original items maintained low consistency ($\alpha = .6778$). One of these items (Advergames make children want things they don't really need) was adapted to include parental attitudes of advergaming directed at children instead of web ads’ ability to influence materialism in general. This item used a 5-point Likert scale format (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree).

Three additional questions (see appendix C) included were based on a scale developed by Wolin, Korgaomkar, and Lund (2002) that measured attitudes of web advertisements and their ability to corrupt values. Wolin et al. (2002) suggests web advertising has the ability and power to mold users’ values and corrupt them as well. Furthermore, Wolin et al. (2002) suggests web ads can undermine parents’ values that they intend to impress upon their children. Original items include the following: ‘Web advertising sometimes makes children live in a world of fantasy'; 'Web advertising takes undue advantage of children'; and 'Web advertising leads children to make unreasonable purchase demands on their parents'. The original scale maintained low consistency ($\alpha = .6368$). These three items were adapted to include parental attitudes of advergaming directed at children instead of general attitudes of web ads’ ability to corrupt values. Items used a 5-point Likert scale format (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). These items maintained an alpha coefficient of .300 in the current study.
Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Dependent Variable for Entire Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Scale Midpoint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATTADVERGM</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47.17</td>
<td>6.932</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seven additional questions were included in this section of the instrument. These items are based on of Carlson and Tanner’s (2006) previous work on parental attitudes of sexual abstinence advertisements and Walsh et al’s (1998) work on mother’s attitudes toward government regulation of children’s television advertising. Items include the following: ‘Most advergames for children are okay for them to play by themselves’; ‘My child learns something by playing advergames’; ‘There’s nothing wrong with advergames sponsored by toy manufacturers’; My child enjoys playing advergames’; ‘My child and I talk about the advergames he or she plays’; ‘There’s nothing wrong with advergames sponsored by food manufacturers’; and ‘My child understands that advergames are a type of advertising’. All items used a 5-point Likert scale format (1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). These seven items maintained an alpha coefficient of .421 in the current study.

All 15 questions were summed to form the dependent index ATTADVRGM (table 2). The dependent index had an acceptable reliability coefficient of .728, which exceeds the .70 criteria established by Nunnally (1978).

RESULTS

The analysis sample consisted of 214 completed online questionnaires. This sample size was deemed appropriate according to previous work on parental attitudes of children’s advertising (see e.g. Walsh et al. 1998 and Carlson and Tanner, 2006).
Table 3
Comparison of Attitudes Toward Advergaming Across Parental Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authoritative (N= 40)</th>
<th>Authoritarian (N=48)</th>
<th>Neglecting (N=46)</th>
<th>Indulgent (N=42)</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>F-Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47.58*</td>
<td>48.56*</td>
<td>45.41*</td>
<td>46.90*</td>
<td>1.663</td>
<td>.177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No significant differences detected between parenting styles at the .05 level.

Sample resulted in a relatively even distribution of fathers (48.1%) and mothers (51.9%) (Table 4).

Demographic characteristics for children revealed that there were 114 males (53.3%) and 100 females (46.7%). 16.4% were seven years old, 19.2% were eight years old, 26.2% were nine years old, 22.9% were 10 years old, and 15.4% were 11 years old. Only 61 (28.5%) parents indicated their child had played an advergame in the past 30 days. 117 (54.7%) parents said their child had not played and 36 (16.8%) parents said they did not know. Of those 61 parents that indicated their child had played an advergame, 153 different types of advergames were identified.

ANOVA Results

Table 3 reports the results of the hypotheses tests. H1a posits that authoritative parents are likely to hold more negative attitudes towards children's advergaming than indulgent parents. Though it was found that authoritative parents scored higher on the dependent index; ATTADVERGM (M=47.58) compared to indulgent parents (M=46.90) the ANOVA analysis returned insignificant results (F=1.663, p=.177). Thus there is no support for hypothesis H1a. H1b adds that authoritative parents are likely to have more negative attitudes towards children’s advergames than neglecting parents. Authoritative parents
Table 4
Selected Demographic Data for the Study Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 or over</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islander</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-Racial</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a high school grad</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school grad</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional degree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
scored higher on the dependent index than neglecting parents (M=45.41) yet no significance was found between the two groups. Thus, H1b was not supported.

H2a posits that authoritarians would hold more negative attitudes of children’s advergaming than indulgent parents. Though authoritarian parents scored higher on the dependent index (M=48.56) than indulgent parents (M=46.90) ANOVA revealed no significant differences. H2b adds that authoritarians held more negative attitudes towards children’s advergaming than neglecting parents. Though neglecting parents scored lower on the dependent index (M=45.41) than authoritarians, ANOVA analysis found no significant differences between these two groups. Thus, there is no support for either hypothesis H2a or H2b.

Examinations of questions within the dependent index revealed three significant interactions at the .05 level. Significance was found in regard to parents’ attitudes toward advergames ability to lead to family conflict, ‘Advergames directed at children lead to family conflict’ (F= 3.738, p=.012), their attitudes that children should not be alone when they play advergames, ‘Most advergames are okay for children to play by themselves’ (reverse coded) (F= 3.622, p=.014), and parents’ attitudes that advergames sponsored by food manufacturers aren’t looked well upon, There is nothing wrong with advergames sponsored by food manufacturers’ (reverse coded) (F= 3.199, p=.025).

Discussion and Limitations

The objective of this study was to investigate variations in parental attitudes towards children’s advergaming. Findings indicated that parental style might not offer as many insights into variations in attitudes towards children’s advergaming as past research
on television advertising has. Variations in mean attitudinal scores among the four parenting styles was minimal and though this proximity between parenting styles was reflected in past research, this study failed to find significance in all hypotheses. The discrepancies in results between this study and prior studies may be explained by the differences in the way the sample was acquired, the profile of the sample, the method for determining one’s categorization of parenting style, differences in the dependent measure of this study compared to measures in previous studies, and the correlation of social desirability with parental style.

Previous studies that utilized parental socialization theory have acquired their sample most commonly through a convenience basis. For example, Rosen et al. (2008) acquired 314 participants from one area (Los Angeles) and found that 37% of the sample was classified as negligent. This study, which utilized a geographically diverse sample, had an even distribution of parenting styles compared to previous research in this area. By looking at a regional area rather than a nationally diverse area, as this study has, past convenience techniques may have incorrectly captured the true distribution of parenting styles.

Another common method of sample accrual used in past research utilized schools in order to distribute written surveys to children. These children would then give the survey to their parents. By involving the child in the research process, parents may have felt more inclined to involve themselves with that particular research area. This study bypassed children as distributors and located parents through the use of online panels. This difference in sampling method may have resulted in a lowered involvement with the topic
area among parents. Lowered involvement with the topic area may have produced changes in the attitudes that resulted in the rejection of all hypotheses.

Previous research has traditionally focused on mothers as the subject of interest because of their central role in raising children. This study purposefully garnered an even distribution of mothers and fathers. The decision to do so may have resulted in the insignificant results. Though family dynamics are shifting and fathers have taken more of a central role compared to previous times, it may be that mothers still maintain the strongest attitudes toward advertisements directed at their children than fathers do.

The assignment of parenting style according to the median scores for each dimension is not only unusual but also unreliable. This method for categorization indicates there is no standardized score for the parenting orientation scale. In other words, parents’ categorization of style is dependent upon all other scores in the sample. The designation of parenting style according to this method excluded 38 participants from being categorized as any style as they all fell exactly on the median score for both dimensions. This scale midpoint response bias may be a result of participants’ compensation for survey participation. A 13-year content analysis for survey response bias carried out by Macias et al. (2008) shows that, out of all incentives offered for survey completion, a promised sum produced one of the lowest response rates (44%). Although there were no incomplete surveys in this research, the very fact that participants were compensated could have influenced them to respond quickly and without effort or involvement.

The differences in results between this study and prior studies may be a result of the formation of the dependent index. Prior studies that looked at attitudes toward
government regulation of advertising framed every question to position television food advertising as a negative issue. The current study worked to maintain a balanced dependent index that had a fairly even distribution of positive and negative questions. The exclusion of questions with a positive valence in past research may have produced a response bias that led to more negative attitudes toward children’s advertising, thus resulting in larger discrepancies between parenting style and higher chance of significant results.

Consistent with past research, the largest discrepancies in scores between the parenting styles were between authortitarians, indulgents, and neglectors. This pattern was also reflected between authoritatives, indulgents and neglectors with authoritatives scoring higher than the latter and lower but similar to authoritarians. Though these patterns on the dependent index are reflective of the proposed hypothesized direction significance was not found. This may be a result of a balanced dependent scale.

Furthermore, though the dependent index managed an acceptable alpha coefficient (.728), looking deeper revealed far less satisfactory measures of consistency. The adoption and adaptation of some original scales produced very low reliability coefficients. This finding indicates that some individual items on the dependent index may need to be reexamined and reworked for future applications in this area.

Unlike previous research in this area, it was found that the Social Desirability scale correlated significantly with the warmth versus hostility dimension. The categorization of parenting style may be a result of social desirability rather than true beliefs on how to raise children. Rather than having true characteristics of the reflected parenting style,
participants merely present themselves that way. This produces a possible incongruence between the subsequent parenting style and their attitude toward advergaming. In other words, if a parent has been classified as an authoritarian, and their warmth versus hostility dimension score correlates with socially desirable responses, then their subsequent attitude toward advergaming cannot be attributed to their parenting categorization.

Future research in this area should look to several directions for improvement. The largest issue involved is the need for a standardized scale of parenting orientation dimensions. Such variation from study to study calls out for either a new theoretical application to advergaming or the development of a parental socialization scale that does not depend on the median dimension scores as a categorization prerequisite. Secondly, future studies on advergaming should look to develop new dependent measures with higher reliability coefficients. Perhaps, as indicated from the three significant interactions found on individual dependent items, future work should develop items that measure more effectively attitudes of family dynamics and advergaming as well as adult supervision of advergaming. Furthermore, the fact that questions concerning food related advergaming garnered significance whereas toy related advergames did not; indicate future directions in this arena should focus on food-themed advergames more so than toy-themed advergames.

The most viable explanation for variations towards advergames may rest outside parental style. Future analysis should look to child age to see if there are significant interactions in parental attitudes toward advergaming. Perhaps parents of younger children will have more negative attitudes toward advergaming than those who have older children. Another important direction to consider may rest in parents’ knowledge of and
exposure to their child’s advergaming. It could be that parents who know their children
play advergames will have more negative attitudes toward them.

Though significance was not found, future analysis shouldn’t completely ignore
parental style as an exponent. It may prove beneficial to this line of research to compare
fathers and mothers in their attitudes toward advergaming. Mothers, more so than fathers,
may be more appropriate when determining how attitudes toward advergaming vary
across parenting style. As this was an online survey about an online advertising issue, the
utilization of an online sample raises questions. An important future direction should
compare attitudes of parents who are surveyed in an online setting to those who are
surveyed in more traditional setting.


number advertising directed at children. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, 14, (1),

memory: A perspective of limited-capacity model of attention. *Journal of Advertising,
36 (4), 75-90.


children’s perceptions, preferences, and requests. *Journal of Advertising, 36 (2), 87-
100.

analysis of survey methodology in communication related journals. *Journal of
Current Issues and Research in Advertising, 30 (1), 79-94.

Moore, E. S. (2006, July). *It’s Childs play: Advergaming and the online marketing of food to

Moore, E. S. & Rideout, V. J. (2007). The online marketing of food to children: Is it just fun

Moore, R. L. & Moschis, G. P. (1981), The role of family communication in consumer

National Center For Education Statistics. (2005, May). *Use of the Internet by persons 3 years
old and over, by type of use and selected characteristics of students and other users:


http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07_414.asp


Appendices:
Appendix A:

Interview Guide

Thank you for coming today to this interview on parenting and the Internet. I understand that you lead busy lives and I appreciate your effort and time. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Nathan Evans and I am currently working on master’s degree in advertising at the University of Tennessee. Please understand that your participation in this focus group is voluntary and anonymous. In no way will your name or personal information be connected to any of your responses.

With that said I am going to ask you some questions.

How many children do you have?
What are their ages?
Now I am going to talk about children ages 7 to 11 and how they use the Internet.

Tell me about what your children do online.

Do your children play online games?
Can you tell me about these online games?
What do they look like?
What do they do?
How often do they play online games?

Have you ever heard of advergaming?
Tell me what you think advergaming is.

Here is an example:

“Advergames are a type of branded entertainment that feature advertising messages, logos, and trade characters. They are typically found online and allow virtual interaction with a product or brand. Advergames offer a combination of entertainment and advertising that can create an emotional connection between the brand and a game. These games encourage children to return by offering them multiple levels of play, repeat playing opportunities and suggestions for other games”.

What do you think about advergaming?
Do you think your child plays advergames?
How often do they play these games?
Does your child ever want to go to a gaming website he or she has seen on TV?
Do you play advergames?
Appendix B:
Thank you for participating in this study on children’s Internet advertising.

Please read the following definition of advergaming.

“Advergames are a type of branded entertainment that feature advertising messages, logos, and trade characters. They are typically found online and allow virtual interaction with a product or brand. Advergames offer a combination of entertainment and advertising that can create an emotional connection between the brand and a game. These games encourage children to return by offering them multiple levels of play, repeat playing opportunities and suggestions for other games”.

In front of you is a power point presentation with six slides. The following six slides are snapshots of different websites. Some of these slides are examples of advergames and some are not.

Please indicate whether you think the slide is an advergame.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slide 1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slide 2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slide 3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slide 4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slide 5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slide 6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Were there any slides that you were unsure of?

About You.

Male  Female
Ages of children between 7 and 11 ___  _____  _____  _____
Appendix C:
Thank you for your participation in this study on parental attitudes toward children’s Internet advertising. All of the information you provide will be kept strictly anonymous. Your participation is voluntary, and if you don’t want to answer any question, you don’t have to.

Attitudes About Parenting
The following questions are concerned about parenting. Please mark the number that best reflects how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

A parent should never be made to look wrong in their child’s eyes.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

I talk it over and reason with my child when he/she misbehaves.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

Parents should know better than to allow their children to be exposed to difficult situations.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

It is best for a child if he/she never gets started wondering whether his/her parents’ views are right.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

Children should be kept away from all hard jobs which might be discouraging.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

Children should never learn things outside the home that make them doubt their parents’ ideas
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

A child should be able to question the authority of his/her parents.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

A child must learn to conform to all school rules and regulations.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

Children should be allowed to disagree with their parents whenever they feel family rules are unreasonable.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

The preservation of order and tradition should be highly valued.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

Children should be encouraged to tell their parents when they feel family rules are unreasonable.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When a child is called he/she should come immediately.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A child has a right to his/her own point of view and should be</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allowed to express it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If you let children talk about their troubles they end up</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complaining even more.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A child’s ideas should be seriously considered before making</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family decisions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Parents who start a child talking about his/her worries don’t</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>realize that sometimes it’s better to leave well enough alone.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Children who are held to firm rules grow up to be the best</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adults.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. If a child has upset feelings it is best to leave him/her alone</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and not make it look serious.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I encourage my child to talk about his/her troubles.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. A child will be grateful later on for strict training.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I joke and play with my child.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. A child should respect his/her parents because they are his/her</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I encourage my child to wonder and think about life.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I don’t mind it particularly when my child argues with me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strict discipline develops a fine, strong character.</strong></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I express my affection by hugging, kissing, and holding my child.</strong></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents should take seriously the opinions of their young children.</strong></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I respect my child’s opinion and encourage him/her to express it.</strong></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I feel that a child should be comforted and understood when he/she is scared or upset.</strong></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Advergaming and Your Child**

Please answer the following questions about the child between 7-11 years of age in your household who has the closest upcoming birthday.

1. This child is a _____ Male _____ Female
2. How old is this child?____
3. I am this child’s ______ Mother _____ Father_____ Other (please explain below)

Please Read the following definition of Advergames

Advergames are a type of branded entertainment that feature advertising messages, logos, and trade characters. They are typically found online and allow virtual interaction with a product or brand. Advergames offer a combination of entertainment and advertising that can create an emotional connection between the brand and a game. These games encourage children to return by offering them multiple levels of play, repeat playing opportunities and suggestions for other games.

Below are two examples of advergames.
4. Has this child has played an advergame in the past 30 days?
   ____ Yes  ____ No  ____ Don’t Know
   (If you answered yes, please answer question #5)

5. Please indicate which advergame(s) he/she has played.

6. If this child has played advergames, which, if any were prompted by advertising he or she saw or heard on TV, radio, or other?

7. Have you played advergames with your child in the past 30 days?
   ____ Yes  ____ No  ____ Don’t Know

**Attitudes Toward Advergaming**
The following questions are concerned with your attitudes and opinions toward advergaming and children. Please mark the number that best reflects how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

Advergames make children want things they don’t really need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most advergames for children are okay for them to play by themselves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child learns something by playing advergames.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advergames allow children to enjoy a world of fantasy.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advergames take undue advantage of children.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advergames lead children to make unreasonable purchase demands on their parents.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is too much advergaming directed at children.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advergames directed at children lead to family conflict.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advergames teach children good eating habits.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There's nothing wrong with advergames sponsored by toy manufacturers.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child enjoys playing advergames.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child and I talk about the advergames s/he plays.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advergames use tricks and gimmicks to get children to buy their products.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There's nothing wrong with advergames for children sponsored by food manufacturers.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child understands that advergames are a type of advertising.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regulation of Advergames

Food-related advergames directed at children should be banned.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

Toy-related advergames directed at children should be banned.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

Advergames that use popular children's program characters should be banned
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

It's the parent's responsibility to explain advergames to their children.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

The Federal government should be involved in the supervision of advergames targeting children
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

Monitoring of children's advergames by an independent organization is needed.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

Advertisers should require parents' permission before children under 12 can play their advergames.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

Advergames for children should be required to identify themselves as advertising.
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

Additional Questions about you
I am always willing to admit it when I make a mistake True False
I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own True False
I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings True False
I like to gossip at times True False
There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone True False
At times I have really insisted on having things my own way True False
I am ___ years old.

I am:  White ____ Black ____ Hispanic ____ Asian/Pacific Islander ____ American Indian ____ Bi-Racial ____ Other (Please Indicate: ____________ )

What best describes your level of education?
  ____ Not a high school graduate
  ____ High school graduate
  ____ Some college
  ____ College graduate
  ____ Graduate/ Professional degree
  ____ Not Sure/ Don't Know
VITA

Nathan Evans was born in Crossville, TN to the parents of Arthur and Patricia Evans. He is the second of two children. He attended South Cumberland Elementary and continued on to attend Westtown High School in Westtown, PA. After graduating, he headed south to Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, FL where he was introduced to Psychology. After a challenging four years in the program he obtained his Bachelor or Arts degree in Psychology under the tutelage of Dr. James MacDougall and Dr. Marjorie Hardy in 2004. He was accepted in the Communications department at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2008 and accepted a graduate assistantship with a focus in advertising. Nathan was recently accepted to the Doctoral program at University of Tennessee, Knoxville and was awarded a teaching associateship under the guidance of Dr. Marlea Grubbs Hoy. He plans to continue his education and research in Knoxville for several years to come.