

THE USE OF INSTAGRAM BY FOOD BRANDS:
ADVERTISING CHANNEL FOR HEALTHY AND CONSCIOUS LIFESTYLE
PERCEPTION

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ABSTRACT

Besides evolving to one of the most popular social platforms reaching 1 billion active users per monthly, Instagram has become an effective advertising channel used by businesses to not only increase visibility and traffic but also to play a role in shaping consumers' beliefs and attitudes towards brands. Parallel to that, the growth of consumers' concerns regarding global issues has led to the emergence of a new lifestyles of health and sustainability (LOHAS) trend, which involves new values and more responsible and sustainable consumption behavior. Food represents one main aspect that contributes to this holistic way of life. Therefore, aligning with this increasing demand represents business opportunities for food companies. As such, the implementation of healthy and conscious lifestyle branding has been used in marketing and appears to be a powerful strategy at the moment. Instagram as an advertising channel appears to represent a substantial means to reach this aim, so it is relevant to study the ways brands make use of Instagram. By combining in-depth interviews and textual analysis research methods, and making use of an interdisciplinary theoretical approach, this thesis empirically investigates how food companies use Instagram as an advertising channel to be perceived as healthy and conscious lifestyle brands. The interviews with brand representatives and a selection of Instagram posts serve to research the problem based on six food brands. A thematic analysis method is used to analyze the complete data. The findings indicate that several aspects play a role in the advertising of healthy and conscious food brands on Instagram. First, the platform appears to be highly valuable to reach specific consumer segments, most notably the possibility to select the target of LOHAS audience, and to tailor Instagram content relevant to health, environmental and ethical perspectives. Second, the promotion of products through advertising appeals is implemented by incorporating emotional and rational product benefits. Third, the opportunity is taken to address major themes connecting to lifestyle trend values, such as the display of utopian atmosphere, the demonstration of transparency and sustainable commitments, the wellness dimension, and authenticity.

KEYWORDS: *Instagram advertising, Lifestyles of health and sustainability, Food brands, Food marketing, Advertising appeals.*

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1. Introduction

In 2018, Forbes wondered whether wellness would be the new luxury and claimed this trend is connected to users cataloging their lives on social platforms (Weinswig, 2018). Besides, it became not uncommon that transnational brands integrated new societal concerns in their communication strategies. Examples such as the new advertising campaign "Coming Together" from Coca-Cola launched with the aim to fight against obesity, or Nestle's new tagline "World's Leading Nutrition, Health and Wellness Company" and the implementation of their child labor-free cocoa plan illustrates companies' fad for health and sustainable concerns. Hence, Scrinis (2016) concludes that food organizations have become experts in implementing wellness but also healthy and eco-lifestyles as a powerful marketing strategy.

1.1. New global concerns & lifestyle

Modern societies and populations are facing serious issues, notably concerning the increase of environmental footprint (Stern, 2006), the limitation of resources (Achrol & Kotler, 2011), the rise of public health problems such as the risky growth of obesity and heart disease rates (Hossain, Kavar, & El Nahas, 2007; Laditka & Laditka, 2015), and persistent inequalities and unethical practices (De Pelsmacker, Driensen, & Rayp, 2005; Larson, Reuss, Snyder, Sturr, & Dollars & Sense Organization, 2017). Most of these matters are caused by accrued and unsustainable consumption (McCollough, Bayramoglu & He, 2018), which calls attention to the emergence of new ways of producing and consuming, based on new values. The latter is established on healthier and more conscious norms tending to be more profitable and with less detrimental effects for people and planet. Thus, the confrontation of these concerns and the aspiration for a better future leads to the emergence of a healthy, conscious lifestyle.

The definition of this new way of life differs among studies. However, it usually considers several characteristics such as the body and mind health, as well as ecological and ethical concerns (Troost, Rafferty, Luo & Reeves, 2012). Kasimov (2015) confirms that idea, arguing that this lifestyle incorporates the physical, psychological, moral and environmental sub-components but also retains the skills and knowledge from a health culture, implemented in societies promoting healthy ways of living. Today, this healthy and conscious lifestyle seems to be overly discussed on social media,

mainly due to its broad scope, multiple dimensions but also because of its important deployment. Indeed, a large and growing part of the Western population has started to share beliefs, implement behaviors and habits in line with healthy and conscious values, thus making this style of living into a trend (Lucini, Zanuso, Blair, & Pagani, 2015). Indeed, customers have become increasingly aware and mindful regarding current issues. They are committed to incorporating their strong ethical and sustainable values in their everyday consumption.

Furthermore, although the literature discusses this emerging customer group from very different angles, it seems that the majority of recent studies refer to this population as the LOHAS (Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability) audience, and explain that it corresponds to a new customer segment (Szakály, et al., 2017). Indeed, people who are part of LOHAS highly regard personal responsibilities, spiritual and physical health, look for a more natural lifestyle and seek to achieve wellbeing (Szakály, et al., 2017).

1.2. Healthy and conscious lifestyle trend & food choices.

Over the last few years, market research has revealed that food production and consumption represents an important aspect of taking part in the idea of maintaining a healthy lifestyle (Troost, Rafferty, Luo, & Reeves, 2012). Indeed, the demand for healthier, environmentally and ethically friendly food products has grown over the last decades (Jang, Kim, & Yang, 2011). Furthermore, according to research undertaken by Consumers International in 2004, the intense marketing campaigns promoting sustainable food also took part in the expansion for eco products (Kim, Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2013). Also, even though the different aspects involved in this new food consumption habit are interconnected, they refer to specific notions. Sustainable eating can be defined as “access and use by all present and future generations of the food necessary for an active, healthy life, through means that are economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable” (Barber, 2007, p. 2). Also, healthy eating considers food quality, nutriment intake (Tavanxhi et al., 2018) but also the level of calories and the variety of ingredients (Romas & Sharma, 2017). Furthermore, ethical food consumption involves the limitation of negative environmental and social impacts (Johnston, Szabo, & Rodney, 2011).

Currently, one major way to communicate about a healthy and conscious lifestyle is through social media. An illustration of this idea can be for instance the emergence of lifestyle

influencers on channels such as Instagram or YouTube. They create content and engage with their community based on the support of values and demonstration of model ways of living (Chukwuere, & Chukwuere, 2017). Indeed, according to Saboia, Pisco Almeida, Sousa, & Pernencar (2018), social media sites such as Instagram are highly utilized by lifestyle influencers promoting healthy food behaviours and wellbeing, and are very influential in terms of practices and opinion changes. Also, as these online channels appear very relevant for the promotion of the healthy and conscious lifestyle trend, the next section will discuss social media usage, and actively elaborate on the Instagram platform.

1.3. Social Media & Instagram

Social media (SM) websites have rapidly become widely eminent in current society. Many researchers have investigated their usage, implementation, and definition. One of the most accurate explanations of the media can be retrieved from the work of Ahmed and Raziq (2018). It corresponds to a category of internet-based platforms or sites, more commonly taking the form of apps, allowing the possibility to post, share and comment on content, published by the community and organizations. In addition to that, through the exchange of information, it is important to note that SM represents a new form of empowerment and means of information for users (Kietzmann & Canhoto, 2013). Although SM is largely used by the population for this social aspect, its usage is now also incorporated by companies in their activities (Oyza & Edwin, 2015).

Indeed, as part of the intense development of the online sector, social media represents unlimited opportunities for businesses, especially regarding the selection of specific target audiences, the creation of segmented content, and the development of strong relationships with customers, i.e. creating engagement (Oyza & Edwin, 2015; Treem et al., 2016). Besides, in terms of growth, social media websites are the most dynamic communication channel with an annual growth of 14% (ZenithOptimedia, 2015). Furthermore, even though their appearance is relatively recent, businesses found ways to make them effective in term of communication strategy, and show the extent of the possibility that they offer in comparison to traditional advertising (Oyza & Edwin, 2015).

The fact that consumers are more connected and participative, but also that these new websites play a role in the distribution of the information, not only reinforces their dominance as

an effective communication and promotional channel (Treem et al., 2016) but also provides a considerable database, thus disturbing the field of marketing (Pereira, 2019). Indeed, with Web 3.0, the value and uses of data are expanded and transformed into revenues. Also, because it expands the opportunities of the existing web services, companies need to consider the digital environment and adjust their strategy to technological advances (Rudman and Buwer, 2016). Marketing on SM has to be executed differently due to the fact that users can participate, and thus create new meanings around the brand (Deighton and Kornfeld, 2009; Bird, 2011; Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014; Kozinets et al., 2010).

Instagram represents one of the leading social media platforms, with more than 3.5 billion posts and 80 million pictures posts per day (SocialBakers, 2016; Statista, 2016). The application enables the capture and exchange of videos and images between followers. Also, the platform appears to especially fit the idea that SM gives the opportunity for individuals to create a virtual self-presentation (Marshall, 2010). Furthermore, it is the first SM platform that has been developed especially for smartphones (Miles, 2014). Its popularity particularly relates to its high number of users: more than 1 billion per month (Statista, 2018). Also, with its visual dimension, the social media website represents a favorable platform for brands to reach their audiences, but also reinforce their identity (Lavoie, 2015). Instagram appears to be providing value to over two million marketers (Hills, 2018). Furthermore, the platform indicates that based on research extended to 200 million profiles, users visit a minimum of one brand profile per day (Instagram, n.d). This evidences the large numbers of users willing to use the platform to interact and get to know brands. Indeed, through continually evolving, Instagram has become an essential advertising channel. In 2017, the platform reported that the number of companies using it increased from 1.5 million in September 2016 to 8 million in March 2017 (Vassallo et al., 2018). Furthermore, this might be explained by its ability to personalize advertisements with the use of algorithms, which tailors the content to the audience's interests but also facilitates sharing between peers with tags, comments or reposts (Montgomery and Chester, 2009). Also, like social media in general, Instagram appears to be widely used for advertising purposes, with the large number of recent digital advertising concepts taking part in the lifestyle trend such as influencers or sponsored content (Abidin & Ots, 2015, Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

This study focuses on exploring the ways food companies use Instagram posts to be perceived by consumers as lifestyle brands, attached to healthy and conscious concerns. Therefore,

this paper contributes to the current theories about food advertisements and Instagram marketing uses.

1.4. Research problem

Story and French (2004) previously suggested that advertising and media are central to the food industry. They explain the large mediatization of food is due to the repetitive need for the items and the competitive market. On one hand, it appears that to fit the values of the healthy and conscious lifestyle trend and to meet the increasing related demand, businesses need to take a step and adapt their actions to these new consumers' food concerns. On the other hand, according to Harris, Kaufman, Martinez, and Price (2002), the food industry faces competitive pressures and the market has become highly saturated. For these reasons, brands need to differentiate themselves in the competitive landscape, reach consumers at the emotional level and show identical convictions (Lury, 2009). For food brands, the decision to focus on promoting healthy and conscious products, especially via SM, is driven by several strong motivations. The healthy lifestyle trend represents an increase in demand and creates opportunities for brands to diversify their offer from competitors and seduce consumers seeking this new way of life (Euromonitor Research, 2017). Moreover, to remain competitive and meet consumer demand, one of the solutions is to get behind healthy and sustainable products (Harris, Kaufman, Martinez and Price, 2002). Additionally, Lone, Pense, Levi, Chan, Bianco-Simeral (2009) conclude in their research that strategies based on healthy lifestyle represent potential keys to success in the food industry, and when well implemented (i.e. in the marketing campaign) they lead to increased profits (Lone, Pense, Levi, Chan, Bianco-Simeral, 2009). Considering these and following Scrinis (2016), who argues that food businesses have become experts in the implementation of healthy and eco-lifestyle aspects in their strategy, the need for further research regarding the study of this marketing choice made by food companies is apparent.

1.5. Research question

Considering these observations, the main research question is formulated as follows: *“How do food companies use Instagram as an advertising channel to be perceived as healthy and conscious lifestyle brands?”*

The subject of the study concerns companies executing business activities (i.e. production, transformation, distribution) in order to sell food or beverage products to consumers. Food brands mention that the purpose of their advertisements is to inform consumers about their company and their products in order to enable consumers to make conscious choices in their purchasing and consumption (Rhonda, 2011). Previous media studies have shown the increasing use of the Instagram channel in terms of advertising and commercial value (Boyd and Ellison, 2008). The platform states that 60% of its users mention they learn about a brand or products via their feed and 75% of them tell their peers and visit the website after seeing an advertising post (Instagram Business Team, 2016). For these reasons, I decided to focus my research on the use of this platform.

Several sub-questions helped to study the topic and served as thematic steps in order to answer the main research question.

Sub-research question 1:

What drives the selection of a specific target audience for an Instagram marketing campaign of healthy and conscious lifestyle food brands?

This sub-question relates to two related aspects. First, the study of customers interested in healthy and conscious food products. Here, 'interested' means positively responsive to the pursuit of a wellness lifestyle and willing to purchase more sustainable and health-beneficial food. Second, the investigation about the ways the use of Instagram enables brands to specifically reach and connect with that audience. This section will help to understand and identify the benefits for healthy and conscious food brands to focus their marketing strategy on a specific target audience.

Sub-research question 2:

What advertising appeals are being used to promote healthy and conscious lifestyle food products on Instagram?

This refers to the study of the persuasive methods food brands utilize through their Instagram to stimulate customers' interest, influence their opinion and impact their future purchasing behaviors. Also, the analysis of rational and emotional brand benefits will serve to examine in detail the advertising appeals developed in the visuals and captions and to understand how it can be

considered as an integral part of marketing communication strategies for the promotion of healthy and conscious food products.

Sub-research question 3:

How do food brands connect healthy and conscious lifestyle values with food products on Instagram?

The last sub-question relates to the approaches adopted by a brand to serve as an intermediate between the food items and the audience. In other words, this section gives the opportunity to study which aspects companies incorporate on Instagram, which seem relevant and meaningful to consumers following a healthy and conscious lifestyle.

1.6. Academic Relevance

The existing literature regarding food advertising on SM has examined the frequency and influence of junk food marketing on Instagram (Vassallo, Kelly, Zhang, Wang, Young, & Freeman, 2018), the impact of food advertising on SM on the young population (Montgomery & Chester, 2009), and the effects of food posts online on consumers' purchasing choices (Teo, Leng, & Phua, 2018). Also, previous studies focused on the creation of functional foods (Vukasović, 2017), the implementation of quality tools such as labels (Tonkin, Coveney, Meyer, Wilson & Webb, 2016) and the promotion of corporate social responsibility (Lerro, 2018). No studies about the way food companies use SM platforms to be perceived as healthy and conscious have been found. Overall, the companies' perspectives and strategies have been little investigated compared to the consumers' perceptions. Since most of the previous studies are based on a quantitative approach and on qualitative content analysis, the interviews of companies' representatives may help in further understanding the marketing uses of Instagram in the food industry. Additionally, as Vassallo et al. (2018) mention, the previous work done is not sufficient because it does not consider paid advertisements and sponsored posts, even though this drives a lot of audience reach and value. In light of these insights, a more complete analysis of the advertisements posted by brands on the platform seems necessary.

1.7. Social Relevance

The healthy lifestyle trend is associated with a holistic way of life including eating but also sport, mental health, and sustainability. Wellness, nutrition, origin and environmental footprint of food are increasingly recognized as serious worldwide concerns. In their study, Previte & Gurrieri (2015) outline that in our society, this level of health consciousness has developed to the point of a certain type of health veneration.

Goodell and Kraft (1993) already started to notice this phenomenon, which they described as the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, and claimed that the individuals will become excellent customers for eco and health-related offers. Otsuki (2014) defends the idea that a new form of economy is appearing based on a more green, sustainable vision and which implies quality food. Tait (2016) argues that food choice increasingly depends on attributes such as quality and sustainability. Also, some predominant micro trends stand out (Cloake, 2018). There is an increase of production of organic food. Indeed, according to the Organic Monitor (2010), the global sales of these products doubled from 2003 to 2008, going from 25 to 50.9 billion US dollars. Furthermore, in these last years, the vegan diet movement promoting the consumption of plant-based products, mainly driven by Generation Z, has been very present (Cloake, 2018).

For food brands who want to profit from the growing wellness trend and position their products as part of a healthy and conscious range of offers, it is essential to understand the use and efficiency of implementing certain marketing strategies. Marketing on social media has to be executed differently due to the fact that consumers/users can participate, and in this way, create new meanings around the brand (Deighton and Kornfeld, 2009; Bird, 2011; Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014; Kozinets et al., 2010). This is particularly true on Instagram, as shown by the numbers of recent digital advertising concepts such as influencers, and sponsored content taking part in the lifestyle trend (Abidin & Ots, 2015, Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). By exploring the social marketing adjustments already made by some food companies, analyzing their experiences, interpreting their practical application and considering the driven results, this study provides inside knowledge to the food industry and particularly to the brands seeking to be perceived as healthy and conscious.

1.8. Chapter outline

In order to provide a clear answer to the research question and provide the necessary elements to show the credibility of the study, the thesis will be structured as follows.

The second chapter consists of the theoretical background of the research and will provide a clear literature review regarding the topic. A critical and qualitative discussion about the main concepts presented above and the related existing studies will be described. These will help to understand the topic and constitute a framework for the construction of the interviews' topic list and the coding frame for the textual analysis. The third chapter of the thesis focuses on the method and provides an overview of the study's research design. The choice and relevance for using mixed-method research will be explained as well as the sample choice for the interviews, with marketing representatives of specific food companies. Also, the dataset collection process for content analysis will be described, and the value of using thematic analysis for this study will be specified.

Furthermore, the operationalization of the research combining the two methods will be described in detail, with the exploration of the main concepts through the coding tree and the interview guide. Besides, an elaborate discussion will focus on the credibility of the research, by assessing the aptness of the instrument and toolkits used for the analysis and reflecting the researcher's reflexivity and position relating to the topic. Chapter four will present the results of the analysis and give an interpretation in relation to the previous theories found. The findings will be studied and processed into valuable answers according to the three sub-questions. The last chapter will be the conclusion. It will consist of providing a final answer to the main research question, "how do food companies use Instagram as an advertising channel to be perceived as healthy and conscious lifestyle brands?" This chapter will show the purpose and importance of the steps taken in order to provide an authentic and plausible answer, considering internal and external consistency. The theoretical implications and interpretation of the findings as well as possible unexpected insights will be given. Moreover, there will be a critical discussion of the academic and social relevance of the study, notably in relation to the findings. Besides, this section will show the limitations of the research and the value of potential future research on the topic in order to improve the credibility with a bigger pool of data such as more companies interviewed or more posts analyzed, or identifying new perspectives, such as how consumers experience the topic of healthy and conscious food products on Instagram.

2. Theoretical framework

Because the topic of this study is relatively recent, there have only been a small number of directly linked studies. Nevertheless, the connection of several theoretical approaches and previous discussions of concepts appears very insightful to investigate the ways food companies use Instagram as an advertising channel to be perceived as healthy and conscious lifestyle brands. Many researchers have explored the ways SM and especially Instagram represent valuable advertising platforms. These are especially relevant to this study as they not only help to understand the benefits of these digital social websites in terms of traffic, and brand visibility, but also in shaping users' opinions. Therefore, studies regarding this field of interest will constitute the first section.

As Bublitz and Peracchio (2015) explain, focusing on a specific target audience is one of the marketing practices leading to the success of healthy and conscious food brands. For this reason, it seems relevant to study theories regarding consumer segmentation in that industry to better understand what leads healthy and conscious lifestyle food brands to select a specific audience when implementing their Instagram campaign. Thus, the study of the healthy and conscious audience will be the focal point of the second section.

Kotler and Keller (2008) state that integrating advertising appeals in promotional messages is very beneficial for brands as they strongly influence customers' beliefs and attitudes. Lee and Hong (2016), and Wnent (2016), assert the value of implementing emotional and rational appeals in SM advertising. Dubé and Cantin (2000) affirm that both of these appeals are relevant in the promotion of food products. Consequently, the combination of research focusing on these two topics appears very insightful as it informs about the ways advertising appeals can serve as influential tools in the promotion of healthy and conscious food on Instagram. Therefore, previous research on that topic will be reviewed in the third section.

Lastly, since SM platforms are relevant and rich channels for the promotion and perception of lifestyle because they are part of the culture and highly influential (Previte & Gurrieri, 2015) particularly in the field of food consumption (Halkier, 2010), it appears highly valuable to specifically examine how healthy and conscious products are communicated on SM. For this reason, a combination of relevant literature on that topic will be explicitly examined in the fourth and final section of this chapter.

2.1. Social Media & Instagram advertising

As briefly explained in the introduction chapter, social media has become a valuable and recognized advertising channel by marketers who do not hesitate to incorporate it in their strategy (Treem et al., 2016). Social media marketing (SMM) refers to a type of online marketing using social media websites as a tool (Rouse, 2011). This aims to create customer awareness and product recognition, but also provides an ideal platform for content exposure (Gunelius, 2011). Several SMM practices seem to be useful to implement by businesses such as branding, customer relationship management, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), and advertising (Alalwan et al., 2017). In other words, SM is not only a highly utilized platform for social interactions, but also represents a very beneficial platform for brands to communicate, and advertise their products for sales stimulation (Treem et al., 2016). Moreover, as discussed in the previous chapter, Instagram currently stands out in terms of user numbers and business possibilities. Therefore, it seems insightful to better understand what possibilities SM websites offer with regard to the advertising channel. This will constitute the focal point of the first subchapter. Also, a deeper understanding of the opportunities enabled by Instagram's advertising tools is appropriate for this study, so it will be the focus of the second subchapter.

2.1.1 Social Media Advertising

Social Media Advertising (SMA) refers to the promotion of products, services or organizations on these platforms, taking the form of ads and usually involving the use of images, videos, pages, surveys or sponsored content. One of the strengths of SMA as an advertising channel is the possibility to target specific customer segments according to their use of the platforms (Jung, Shim, Jin, & Khang, 2016). Indeed, this idea is connected with the study of Ahmed and Raziq (2018), which states that SM websites provide a suitable environment to develop a strong connection with the audiences, but also target ads to specific users' profiles. Although SMA is based on Internet services, it offers very unique opportunities. Kelly, Kerr, and Drennan (2009) explain that this type of online advertising enables brands to establish a direct dialogue with consumers, to convey non-intrusive or personalized messages, reaching the social circle of customers. Moreover, according to Tuten and Solomon (2018), SMA strongly influences consumers' brand perception but also affects their decision-making and purchasing processes. Also, marketers differentiate between 'owned',

which corresponds to the content directly generated by the brand, and 'earned', which refers to the interactions or posts from the audience (Thornhill, Xie & Lee, 2017). In addition to that, the participative aspect of SM arising out of Web 2.0 and reinforced on Web 3.0 enables the creation of User Generated Content (UGC) (Ahmed & Raziq, 2018).

Another relevant insight from previous research on SMA is the impact of social media uses on customers' perceptions. Indeed, Hassan (2014) clearly reveals that SM brand activities directly influence the way an audience will perceive the company. The communication means, features and values that businesses enhance through their SM profiles contribute to shaping certain brand images. Moreover, although brands tend to use SMA in the construction of brand image, Instagram, with its visual communication specificity, seems to be one of the most efficient platforms for shaping customer perception. Indeed, previous studies indicate that customers refer directly to this app for inspiration and product information but also to get to know companies in more detail (Roth & Zawadzki, 2018). In addition to that, the interactiveness feature of SM upholds its effectiveness in terms of promotional channels. The easy and rapid adjustment in terms of content enables brands to be more relevant in the eyes of customers (Wollan and Zealley, 2018). For example, the possibility of connecting to the seasons, weather, days or current events (Phillipov, 2017) endorses brand credibility and humanity (Ferreti, 2018).

2.1.2. Instagram advertising

Instagram is an SM platform where users and organizations can create profiles and incorporate videos, photos as well as descriptions, usually including the mention of keywords connected with hashtags. Comments, private messages, shares and likes are possible between users (i.e. followers). As mentioned in the introduction chapter, considering the opportunities that the social platform can provide and its impressive growth of users, companies have rapidly incorporated the use of Instagram in their marketing strategy (Statista, 2016; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Also, in their study, Roth and Zawadzki (2018) claim the efficiency of Instagram as a promotional tool, especially regarding Business to Consumer (B2C) advertising. They explain that brands can easily be connected, and reflect positive, friendly and appealing images via the platform (Gunter, 2016). It is interesting to note that in 2017, more than 15% of businesses with a

profile is actively promoting the brand monthly. Not to mention that in the same year, more than 120 million users visited business profiles (Instagram, 2017).

In the light of the extended use by companies, SM websites recently implemented features aiming to transform users into clients, such as the direct possibility to see the price of the products and shop directly (Roth and Zawadzki, 2018). Besides, to improve their customers' relationship and trustworthiness, the use of additional tools can be profitable. For example, by inviting users to tag their products in their content, firms can easily find and interact with them. This can also endorse the effectiveness of product placements performed through influencers' content, but also user generated content (UGC). Indeed, these two relatively recent trends associated with SM are especially relevant to Instagram for advertising purposes. Firstly, the use of social media influencers (SMIs) refers to companies initiating partnerships, or rather collaborations, with celebrities and influential users in order for content to be diffused about their products or services. The value of this intermediary resides in the specific relation that influencers have with their followers. Indeed, several studies argue that the use of SMIs tends to not only increase traffic and visibility, but also adds sponsored content in a more subtle way, and develop authenticity and trustworthiness with the aim of reinforcing brand credibility (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2016). Secondly, there is the repost of UGC, which involves the utilization of consumers' created posts about companies, goods, and services with promotional intent (Belch, Belch, Kerr & Powell, 2012).

The value of both UGC and SMIs resides in the influence of peer communication. Indeed, in both cases, the view of peers (i.e. brand's customers or influencers) owning and using products can influence their purchasing choices. Consumers will most likely buy the items they have seen in their network (Bevins, 2014). Furthermore, the spread of content can be correlated to the notion of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) that corresponds to the online circulation of users' recommendations (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004), and extended possibilities of diffusion, allowing an infinite audience reach (Petrie, 2016).

Thus, with the combination of app promotional tools, opportunities of product placement, visual features, and communicative dimension, Instagram offers great potential to marketers in terms of a successful advertising channel.

2.2. LOHAS market segment

Considering the marketing approaches of this research, it is relevant to look at the consumers. The products and the marketing strategies implemented, as well as the way the message is translated, need to be devised with a specific audience in mind. For this reason, a good understanding of the market, and potentially interested and targeted audiences, for the health-conscious industry is essential. Therefore, it seems pertinent to have a deep understanding of who health and conscious consumers are and what their values are. This will also be investigated with the use of previous literature on the Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS).

2.2.1. LOHAS consumers

As suggested in the introduction chapter, individuals have become highly concerned about the current global issues and their consequences. Also, their strong preoccupations have led to the beliefs in profound values and specific lifestyles, and new attitudes regarding consumption of goods and services (Choi & Feinberg, 2018). A very specific market trend and consumers stand out in the literature when investigating the definition of health and conscious audiences. LOHAS refers to a recent demographic or market segment designed by the Natural Marketing Institute and focuses on multiple aspects such as the environment, personal development, health, fitness, and sustainability. This way of life pursues a perfect balance and harmony between the planet, people and society. Also, to be more precise, this trend tends to designate the individuals making daily choices relative to their concerns. One of the important characteristics of the consumers following LOHAS is the quest to follow a healthy lifestyle, which also respects the environment (Urh, 2015). The notion of sustainability has to be comprehended in a broader dimension and refers to the impacts of lifestyle on well-being.

The LOHAS markets and its customers should not be described with the basic demographic variables such as gender, age, or income but more in terms of psychographics, which here refers to the share of concerns, values, consumption choices and way of life (Heim 2011; Choi & Feinberg, 2018). According to many studies, LOHAS consumers do not correspond to a homogeneous group of individuals (Ernst & Young 2008). The most common feature of LOHAS consumers is their strong commitment and will to align their personal health and the environment. Indeed, this segment not only seeks products for their personal benefits but also considers how their consumption behavior impacts the environment. Their behavior concerning product purchase and perception relative to

brands are based on and shaped by questions such as “what was the manufactured condition?”, “where does it come from?”, “what are the benefits for my health?”, or “what is the impact on the planet?” (Choi & Feinberg, 2018).

Even though this consumer segment appears very broad, certain beliefs and attitudes enable businesses to recognize them. Indeed, different market categories help to define them. Some of them appear to be particularly insightful in the study of healthy and conscious food advertising (Urh, 2015). The first is the Healthy Living segment, which corresponds to the dominant entry point and primarily refers to food consumption choices and health-related dimensions such as fitness. Second is the Ecological Lifestyles segment which believes that their wellbeing and the planet are interconnected. They support actions such as recycling, are enthusiast about green products and are very informed regarding ecological matters. The third segment, which is closely related to the second, is concerned about a Sustainable Economy—the planet, fair-trade commitments, and the triple bottom line—and they highly value ethical business practices. LOHAS consumers claim the interconnection between these aspects and are convinced that the incorporation of wellness, health, and sustainable concerns should be operated in any organization (Urh, 2015). Moreover, according to Choi & Feinberg (2018), the Natural Marketing Institute claims that the segment could be identified and measurable through 12 statements: (1) I protect the environment; (2) My purchase decisions are based on their effect on the world; (3) I choose environmentally friendly products; (4) I prefer products manufactured in sustainable ways; (5), When possible, I choose sustainably sourced products; (6) I prefer products made of recycled materials; (7) I am socially conscious; (8), I teach the benefits of environmentally friendly products to family or friends; (9) I am willing to pay an additional 20% for sustainably manufactured products; (10) I choose renewable energy sources; (11) I prefer sustainable agriculture practices; and (12) I buy products from companies with values like my own. Besides, in general, compared to the rest of the population, LOHAS consumers are more inclined to certain purchases, especially regarding the food industry. Indeed, they will most likely choose eco-friendly products such as those that are organic and ethically produced, and with a limited environmental footprint (Natural Marketing Institute, 2008). Moreover, studies argue that LOHAS has a great chance of becoming the most meaningful customer trend and the largest segment (Lohas Groupsite, 2015). Consequently, companies have an interest in focusing on that market and addressing value-driven strategies.

Moreover, although LOHAS represents a very broad audience, two major customer segments stand out. Indeed, even though both of them share several similar values and seek a holistic way of life, the literature has shown that they can have diverse priorities. The first segment involves customers especially attentive to their health and prioritizing the consumption of food that has a beneficial health impact. Wansink (2017) identifies this fluid group of consumers and claims their strong predisposition to make healthy food decisions. The author refers to them as the Health Vigilant customer group and informs that they are especially concerned about calories and nutritional value and tend to play sport regularly as it represents an essential component of a healthy lifestyle (Hills, 2018). Besides, according to Lone, Pence, Levi, Chan, and Bianco-Simeral, (2009) this customer group is majority female. The second segment appears to be especially concerned by ethically concerns, mainly regarding the human and environmental impact of consumption. Lerro, Vecchio, Caracciolo, Pascucci, and Cembalo (2018) acknowledge this group, and claim that these customers are particularly attentive to the implementation of corporate social responsibility practices (CSR). Production methods implying Fairtrade labeling or having low environmental footprint are part of the aspects especially relevant for this audience. In order to better comprehend the extent of the LOHAS market segment, a more complete discussion of the global LOHAS audiences' values will be expressed in the next sections.

2.2.2 LOHAS values

The notion of value appears essential in the study of LOHAS. In addition, after understanding who are the individuals corresponding to this market, it seems valuable to better understand the values leading their lifestyle and leading their perception in regard to food products.

First, as briefly mentioned above, consumers attached to this segment pay great attention to the environment surrounding them. Indeed, although previous research shows that the environmental footprint of food products has been growing in the last decades (Onwezen, Bartels, & Antonides, 2014), this point seems to be particularly influential in the eyes of the health and conscious lifestyle audience. Indeed, Mont, Neuvonen, and Lähteenoja (2014) confirm that arguing that particular attention should be paid to the environment in a global perspective means taking part in the pursuit of sustainable lives. Then, whereas they defend the protection of the planet,

they are also supportive of innovation. Indeed, according to Heim (2011), the LOHAS consumers could be seen as a hybrid as while enjoying and valorizing nature, they encourage technological developments. This could be explained by the fact that innovation plays a big part in increasing quality of life and serves to support a better stage of wellbeing (Mont and Power, 2013; Mont, Neuvonen, and Lähteenoja, 2014), in ways that improve lifestyle such as by facilitating work, organization or communication (Jackson, 2005; Seyfang, 2009). Furthermore, changes in terms of structure and mindset are also appreciated as they can lead to the creation of better systems or habits (Carayannis, Sindakis, & Walter, 2015). For instance, regarding food, the challenge of current beliefs about the industry could not only help to implement better consumption habits but on a broader scale be advantageous for the humans and the planet (Turpin, 2018). Next, according to the literature, transparency appears to be a major value, notably regarding the food industry. Radice (2017) explains that the demand for more transparency and clarity is one of the main characteristics of the healthy and conscious lifestyle trend. This is also acknowledged by Urh (2015), who states that the LOHAS market has an increasing need for information regarding the provenance of ingredients. Furthermore, in relation to product provenance, the notion of locality seems to be highly discussed by authors investigating LOHAS. Dunning, Bloom, and Creamer (2015) argue that food locally produced receives more enthusiasm by these customers. Essoussi and Zahaf (2008) suggest that LOHAS consumers prefer local food and organic ingredients and food items. This can also be connected to the freshness of the products. Indeed, this aspect constitutes one of the highly considered values in terms of food choices. Although this feature helps to endorse the transparency image of the products (Rowe, 2014), consumers will most likely associate it with nature and connote it to health benefits. Moreover, the freshness can be reinforced by the presence of raw or whole food. As a matter of fact, many examples and research have shown that the presentation of unprepared ingredients not only emphasizes the healthy and conscious aspect of food (Bugge, 2015; Crawford 2006), but also connotes the worship of nature and its positives benefits on living beings (Princess, Märtha, Louise, & Samnøy, 2009; Bugge, 2015). Another largely expressed value relative to the LOHAS and food involves the notion of authenticity, which refers to the concepts of reality and trustworthiness (Daneshkhu, 2018; Ferreti, 2018). According to Kasriel-Alexander (2018) and Gordon (2018), individuals following a healthy and conscious lifestyle are much more sensitive to authenticity. Furthermore, Pattuglia, Mingione (2016) and Beverland (2006) explain that authenticity relative to food can be featured in several

ways such as via the production process, the heritage or the aesthetic look. Furthermore, additional value can be conjoined with authenticity, such as 'homemade' preparation. Indeed, many authors inform that combined with the handmade aspect, these processes are easily associated with wellbeing lifestyles, for instance as a result of the relaxation and creativeness stages they help to procure (Essen, & Mårtensson, 2014; Mills, White, Wrieden, Brown, Stead, & Adams, 2017). Furthermore, in addition to encouraging daily efforts, homemade practices reinforce the natural dimension of food (Kasriel-Alexander, 2018). Associated with the notion of effort, achievements and challenges seem to be relevant values to LOHAS consumers. Indeed, according to Melnyk, Amaya, Szalacha, & Hoying (2016), the incorporation of daily goals and constant personal reassessment are beneficial for improvement and social changes. Furthermore, the physical healthiness and condition of the body represents an essential value for the LOHAS consumers. Indeed, this study states that behaviors leading to better health constitute one of the main priorities in the wellness culture. Additionally, nutritional aspects (Previte & Gurrieri, 2015) and fitness or exercise aspects represent some founding concepts of this lifestyle (Melnyk, Amaya, Szalacha, & Hoying, 2016; Anker, Boysen, Sandøe, Kamin, & Kappel, 2011).

2.3. Advertising appeal

Advertising appeal refers to the creative way brands connect their products with consumers' demand in terms of needs, benefits, and desires. The appeal retrieved from promotional images or messages represents the most important aspect for the audience. When well defined, appeals establish a creative context and add more consistency within a marketing campaign. Appeals are commonly separated into two distinct groups (Dix & Marchegiani, 2013). First, rational appeals appear to be easier identifiable, straightforward and refer to clear motivation for product assets, problem-solving or safety for instance. They refer to the performance and clear functional aspects such as quality or expertise. Second, emotional appeals, on the contrary, relate to more hedonic desires, but also audiences' underlying feelings, need for stimulation of personal expression, but also self-esteem and social approval (Cutler & Javalgi, 1993). They tend to encourage positive feelings such as humor, joy or pride, or limit the negatives such as guilt (Stafford, 2005, Zhang, Sun, Liu & Knight, 2014). Previous literature indicates that the definition of and focus on advertising appeal are notably relevant in the digital era as marketers can easily

identify their performance, for example, by measuring the engagement created around them in social media (Dix & Marchegiani, 2013).

2.3.1 Advertising appeals and social media

Although SM has intensively participated in the shift and involvement of new advertisement channels, the implementation of effective and successful marketing campaigns in these platforms can be challenging. Also, as briefly explained in the previous chapter, one way to analyze their intended impacts is to look at consumers' brand perception developed via the ads (Lee & Hong, 2016). Wnent (2016) states that the messages and signals used in SMA can influence customers' perception and attitudes. Also, Kotler and Keller (2008) argue that the language implemented by brands relate to either emotional or rational appeals. This elucidates the idea of Lee & Hong (2016), claiming that the measure of SMA posts is connected to its emotional appeal and its informativeness. The use of emotional appeals trigger strong emotional responses and seem to generate strong motivational relevance. Furthermore, posts based on emotional appeals appear to be more likely to be shared between users (Alhabash, et al., 2013). Besides, Lee & Hong (2016) argue that the stronger the emotions that are incorporated in SMA ads, the most likely users will develop a positive brand image.

The term informativeness relates to the given definition of rational appeal. It corresponds to the capacity to inform the audience about the product's features to allow them to make choices corresponding to the characteristics that they value as important. In other words, the use of informative messages in ads should help customers to evaluate the features and make more rational decisions. Taylor et al. (2011) claim in their research that the display of information in ads seem to be more valuable to more consumers. Therefore, the use of informative content in SMA most likely generates a positive image about the brand, and helps spread the ad over the consumers' network (Lee & Hong, 2016). This idea supports the research of Muk and Chung (2014), which argues that with SMA, the use of utilitarian values amplifies audiences' positive perception of a brand.

2.3.2 Advertising appeal and food product promotion

Dubé and Cantin (2000) claim the relevance of studying the emotional and rational appeals used in the promotion of food products, explaining that these two approaches are often incorporated in the design of persuasive strategies. For the authors, in the context of food, the rational appeal also mentioned as cognitive components of attitudes involves the target's beliefs, attributes, and attitudes regarding the product. The emotional appeals, mentioned as the affective component, reflect the feelings, sensations, and experiences about the food, such as the pleasure or recall of pleasant memories. Besides, according to their research, the promotion of health attributes related to food generally employs a rather informational tone and triggers rational benefits, while food marketers tend to focus on emotions such as pleasure. However, as a matter of fact, previous literature appears to discuss the use of these two distinct appeals when promoting food items, including the most common emotional benefits used in food advertising.

First, many studies note that food companies, in their ads, strive to trigger the emotional benefits for their targets. What is most commonly used in food advertising refers to the notion of pleasure and its strong influence on customer perception. Indeed, multiple authors in the field of food appeal and advertising have investigated the sentiments and motivation behind the temptation of food products. It appears that the emotions related to pleasure are involved not only in the consumption but also the anticipation, preparation and contemplation (Kringelbach et al., 2012, Sneijder and Te Molder, 2006, Somers et al., 2014). Relating to the contemplation, the appearance of the items plays an essential role. Hill (2007) confirms that idea, explaining that this looking aspect influences and motivates the emotions of pleasure and stimulates the desire of consumption. Besides, as briefly mentioned by Dubé and Cantin (2000) and Rode, Rozin, and Durlach (2007), the pleasant emotions produced by food can be associated with previous joyful experiences and memories. Moreover, More and Sara (2014) argue that although the thought of food alone can result in pleasure stimulation, the presence of representative visuals can highly reinforce that emotion. Furthermore, considering the fact that individual emotional responses affect purchasing choice and consumption (Siwik & Senf, 2006), Pettigrew (2016) concludes that developing a strong pleasure appeal is very effective in terms of food promotion. Second, it seems that the notions of pride and guilt are usually discussed regarding the promotion and emotion relative to food products. These feelings refer to the positive and negative self-conscious emotions

based on self-evaluation and judgment established according to personal standards (Robins, Richard & Schriber, Roberta, 2009). Also, where the feeling of anticipated guilt should be limited in order to avoid negative emotions, the feeling of anticipated pride should be stimulated (Isen 2000; Larsen 2000). Both of these appear to be particularly relevant in the promotion of healthy and sustainable food products (Onwezen, Bartels, & Antonides, 2014; Hynie, MacDonald & Marques, 2006). The values behind the products will tend to limit the guilt and encourage pride emotions (Onwezen, Bartels, & Antonides, 2014). Bellin, Wollan, and Zealley (2018) conclude that the notions of pride and guilt are highly relevant in food advertising and that marketers should incorporate them into their marketing strategy. Third, as food also relates to the notions of happiness and conviviality, it is important to incorporate the notion of joy produced by the sharing of meals. Indeed, the literature informs that one of the main drivers for food decisions relates to the solicitation of groups, especially the notion of belonging to a community (Nicolaou, et al., 2009; Gunter, 2016). Therefore, the aspects of group belonging and sharing are a very relevant appeal to use in food advertising (Bellin, Wollan & Zealley, 2018). Although emotional appeals are an efficient tool to include in messages and visual advertising for the promotion of food, the literature indicates that the use of rational or functional appeal is also very valuable.

Indeed, many studies investigate the effectiveness of incorporating or connoting functional benefits in food advertisements. Dubé and Cantin (2000) inform in their study that the informational message appeal, related to the rational benefits, tends to be very influential in terms of food consumption choices. In advertising, these can be implemented via allusions or clear statements about different aspects such as the health consequences, the convenience, or the nutritional value. Rozin et al. (1999) explain that even though individuals happen to shape their beliefs and attitudes toward food items through the aspect of pleasure, they are also highly influenced by functional matters relevant to their personal situation or context. Above all, convenience and quality are the most used rational benefits in food promotion. Furthermore, by combining impactful visual elements with additional information, the rational appeal will most likely be reinforced. Indeed, the influence of the rational appeal on consumers' food product perception can be supported and increased through the association of demonstrative figures and suggestive messages (Johar & Sirgy, 1991).

2.4. Healthy and conscious product communication on SM

Even though few studies have been conducted regarding the use of SM strategies by the healthy and conscious food industry (Klassen et al. 2018), several pieces of research can illustrate the opportunities that it offers as an advertising channel. A review of interesting findings from previous research will serve to investigate that particular topic. Also, the communicative dimension will be specifically studied according to theories reflecting on product perception and product promotion. These will constitute the following two sections.

2.4.1 Healthy & conscious product perception

The perception of a product or brand involves the consumer assessment of meanings relating to the item or organization. According to the literature, customer perception closely refers to the notion of value. Indeed, the meaning and apprehension generated by individuals revolves around the values they stand for as well as their personal standards. The term value relates to the individual cultural construction but also the benefits offered by a product or service. Although the cultural dimension of value remains to concrete experiences to a consumer, the benefits cover the advantages and specific features (Solomon, 2009). Also, both of these aspects are influencing factors in customers' meaning-making and judgment. Furthermore, based on the theory of Durkheim, Horn (2017) indicates that by intermediating aspects from the cultural context, the personal affect and the evaluation of benefits, values contribute to the shaping of customer perception. According to the literature review of this field, several studies have investigated the elements that most likely encourage the creation of positive meanings and aim to reinforce the healthy and conscious aspects of food products in SMA.

In their research, Cavusoglu and Demirbağ-Kaplan (2017) find that the association of visuals representing food and information connoting the notion of well-being tends to impact the perception of the audience. Besides, the authors explain that the incorporation of colors does not only positively impact the image of the brand, but also suggests specific values related to the healthy and conscious approaches. For example, the incorporation of green tones easily refers to sustainable values in the eyes of customers. In continuity with that line of thought, Anker, Boysen, Sandøe, Kamin, and Kappel (2011) explain that trigger associations are often made between the

production of food and its influence on health. This is also reinforced by the use of health and nature symbols which increase the association with an idyllic lifestyle. For example, it has been shown that the presence of certain concepts or objects such as the sea, sport, and vegetation, influence consumers' association with this trend. They explain this phenomenon by saying that the perception of food brands as healthy and conscious is linked to the use of three types of elements: functional claims (e.g. omega 3), process claims (e.g. organic production, fair trade), and health symbols (e.g. sporting activities). Additionally, according to the study of Melnyk, Amaya, Szalacha, and Hoying (2016), the perception of wellness relative to the items is intermediated by the healthy lifestyle beliefs of consumers. In other words, individuals evaluate the wellness aspect of a product differently, according to their culture, knowledge, and healthy habits' behavior.

2.4.2 Healthy & conscious product promotion

Promotion takes part in the integrated activities of marketing communication. Indeed, in addition to being one of the marketing mix dimensions, it also represents an essential function aiming to support companies' sales and a component of the strategy. Furthermore, it is important to note that promotion messages are displayed on the most appropriate channels to reach the target (Salai, Sudarevic, Đokic, & Pupovac, 2014). Also, in relation to the topic of this research, Mesaroš, Đokić, and Penić (2013) claim that due to the high level of competition, the integration of promotion in marketing communications is essential in the food industry. Indeed, after investigating the perception of healthy and conscious food products on Instagram, it is necessary to comprehend how Instagram facilitates the promotion of these healthy and conscious food products. Because this topic is relatively recent, there has been little discussion about the way brands advertise these types of items. Nevertheless, some studies discuss what ways the SM platform enables the advertising of these specific niche products. Also, these provide valuable theories to guide both qualitative content analysis and interviews.

First, according to the research of Cavusoglu and Demirbağ-Kaplan (2017), the use of hashtags is a useful promotional tool on Instagram. Indeed, by using specific keywords, brands can not only be associated with themes but also increase their traffic and visibility. For example, it appears that #healthy is commonly associated with four themes that consumers often align with the hashtag, relating to the concept of lifestyle, namely fitness, food, feelings and fashion.

Also, the promotion of healthy and conscious food products on Instagram can be reinforced with the use of SMIs. Advertisement through influential profiles appear more authentic, intimate, reliable and trustworthy for a majority of users than conventional advertising (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2016). By developing a level of trust, and sharing their life experiences, influencers impact the ideas that consumers have about products, but also influence their purchasing behavior. In the case of food products, the consumption of certain items by influencers will not only increase the credibility and impact the brand image, but also contribute to higher visibility and customer reach (Uzunoğlu and Misci Kip, 2014; Liu, et al. 2015, cited by Klassen et al. 2018). For example, due to the fact they are seen as “lifestyle experts”, when a fitness influencer promotes a product, consumers might perceive it as healthy, and connect the brand to a healthy and conscious lifestyle. Furthermore, users can discover the products thanks to the content posted by SMIs (Hoffman & Tan, 2015).

Moreover, the possibility of using UGC makes Instagram a valuable channel for the promotion of healthy and conscious food products (Ramirez, Gau, Hadjimarcou & Xu, 2018). Indeed, in the same manner as SMIs, UGC can positively contribute to developing brand awareness (Shea, 2008). The repost of users’ content related to the products is very beneficial because it illustrates them in natural situations, but also because it displays inspirational utilization. UGC posts facilitate consumer-to-consumer conversations and enable followers to contribute to the product or brand promotion (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). This opportunity is particularly relevant in the promotion of brands seeking to advertise lifestyle products. Indeed, according to Roth and Zawadzki (2018), besides the fact that UGC achieves more trust and interaction, it enables businesses to keep track of the audience responses and level of interaction and later uses this information in order to achieve better engagement for future publications.

The last (but by no means least) advantage of Instagram as a promotional channel resides in its ability to advertise messages to the most likely interested target (Belch, Belch, Kerr & Powell, 2012). Indeed, thanks to the algorithm systems developed by the platform, followers received ads that presumably reflect their content and interests. In other words, food brands have more chance of reaching the target willing to buy their products. Therefore, the promotion will be more effective as the ads will be more impactful and relevant in the eyes of the users (Belch, Belch, Kerr & Powell, 2012).

3. Methodology

This chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the methodology applied to research the ways food companies use Instagram as an advertising channel to be perceived as healthy and conscious lifestyle brands. Considering the qualitative nature of this research, the findings from the analysis cannot be generalized or replicated. However, a detailed and meticulous explanation about the choices made and steps taken during the research is essential to understand the interpretations and convince the trustworthiness of the study (Brennen, 2012). Therefore, the following sections will inform about the research design, the sample and data collection, the operationalization of concepts, the analytic approach, and lastly about the credibility.

3.1. Research design

Qualitative research was used in order to answer the central research question. According to Brennen (2012, pp.1-22), qualitative studies enable a search for ways to interpret and analyze experiences in their contexts. This methodological approach is specifically relevant for Media Studies because it aims to understand social practices by creating meaning with what has been done or said (Brennen, 2012). Flick (2007) confirms the definition by arguing that qualitative studies use material and interpretive practices that make the world visible. Furthermore, Flick adds that it follows a naturalistic approach because it studies phenomena in their natural settings and is based on several theories.

In this study, a combination of textual analysis and interview research was used. The first method enabled a look at how food companies use Instagram for the promotion of healthy and conscious products in practice. The second allowed an investigation of how marketing representatives of food brands perceive the way the SM channel can facilitate the promotion of healthy and conscious lifestyle food products, to better comprehend and interpret the findings from the content analysis and provide additional insights. Indeed, the use of two combined methods allowed a comparison of the insights given by the brands during the in-depth interviews with the findings analyzed from their practical application retrieved from the social platform. Besides, mixed methods prevented the study's scope from converging too much, which could otherwise impact the validity. Furthermore, the cluster of both findings was valuable to answer the

three sub-questions, and consequently, helped to provide elements related to the main research question.

3.1.1. Textual analysis

According to Brennen (2012), the concept of text related to textual analysis involves literacy as well as visual constructs, referring to symbols, habits and intrinsic rules relative to the use of language. Text is interpreted to make meanings and connect relationships. Also, with the use of words, ideas and elements, text provides real social constructs and is integrated with cultural contexts (Atkinson and Coffey, 1996). For these reasons, and because researchers acknowledge that it allows a valuable and large potential assessment of meaning and interpretation (Brennen, 2012), a textual analysis was conducted to study food brands' Instagram posts. This qualitative research method is particularly relevant because it helps to reveal patterns and breaks down content into categories representing identical or similar meanings from a chosen dataset (Schreier, 2012, p.171; Weber, 1990, cited in Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p,1278). The method provides the opportunity to take a look at numerous pieces of text or images, to form or confirm abstract meanings, and to carry out a more extensive analysis of topics (Schreier, 2014). Moreover, it is flexible in terms of the construction of categories thanks to the data-driven coding process (Brennen, 2012).

3.1.2. In-depth interviews

In order to gain valuable insights for the study and answer the sub-question "how do marketing representatives of food brands perceive the way Instagram can facilitate the promotion of healthy and conscious lifestyle food products?", in-depth interviews were used as a complementary method to textual analysis. Interviews with six representatives of several healthy and conscious food companies were conducted. One way to better understand the meaning and sense that people make, and get detailed knowledge about their experience, is to conduct in-depth interviews (Kvale, 2007). Hermanowicz (2002) suggests that interviews provide the means to study people's motives and perceptions, and also provides more insightful information than other methods such as questionnaires.

Furthermore, the semi-structured approach was chosen as it allows an elaboration of the answers through open questions while giving the possibility for further questions in the conversation process (Brennen, 2012, p. 70). The flexible nature of this method gives the possibility to adjust the conversation flow, and the topics lists, in case the person representing the brand comes up with new information relevant to the topic of research. Moreover, in-depth interviews facilitated a look at potential heterogeneous and homogeneous patterns between the participants. Also, this method was chosen because it facilitates the "intimate understanding of people and their social worlds" (Hermanowicz, 2002, p. 480).

3.2. Sampling and data collection

Flick (2007) asserts the importance of the sampling method in qualitative research by explaining that it corresponds to the step that reduces all the potential materials to a selection of justifiable and manageable cases for the study. Also, it determines how the planned research design works in practice. Often, in qualitative research, sampling corresponds to the collection of chosen materials that constructs a corpus and serves to study phenomena or empirical examples. In most cases, the method of selection is purposive (Flick, 2007). The idea behind this data collection method is that sampling should be flexible and iterative in order to be able to possibly adopt the original sample with new findings from the field of the study, while also allowing the discovery of new insights from the data collection (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

In addition to that, numerous researchers note the value of diversity in the data collection. Flick (2007) argues that a diverse sample allows the study of phenomena more in-depth and tends to capture multiple aspects. Following this same idea, Patton (2002) suggests using maximum variation when selecting materials to collect the biggest amount of different cases, in order to explore the range of differentiation and provide more interesting findings. Furthermore, Maxwell (2005) adds that when selecting the sample, the researcher should strive to focus on the heterogeneity of the data and consequently be able to make numerous meaningful comparisons and underline identical features amongst them. Here, the focus was on food brands that create strong engagement on Instagram. Regarding their relevance, the selection criteria were based on brand image, intensive use of Instagram, online popularity, and through strong demonstration of health and conscious concerns through advertisements (i.e. textual or visual connotations). Also,

the variety of strategies used by the companies provides more distinctive insights, resulting in a more complete and multi-dimensional answer (Patton, 2002). Therefore, choosing brands that adopt diverse tones and approaches to send their messages via Instagram gives a better overview of the multiple ways the platform is used to promote healthy and conscious food products. Moreover, Flick (2007) argues that with purposive sampling, the sample is defined according to pre-analysis and that the selected materials are instructive for the study. This method is used to look at specific cases as failures or successes.

In this study, the selection of both materials for the textual analysis and in-depth interviews were based on the light of these insights. Also, following these requirements, six healthy and conscious food brands were chosen: Chipotle, HelloFresh, Leon, Strong Roots, Tony’s Choclonely and 5th Season. This sample provided an elaborate overview of different company cases. Table 3.1. below presents each of them: the concept and business.

Food company name and logo	Type of offers	Healthy and conscious values retrieved from the website	Geographical Market	Date of the first launch	Social media presence
Chipotle Mexican Grill	Mexican chain restaurant	-“ Freedom food certified” -“ Humanely raised and full traceability” -“Fresh produce” -“ Food with integrity”	United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, and France	1993 Colorado	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
HelloFresh	Meal kit delivery	“We believe that everyone deserves honest, natural, delicious, healthy food.”	Austria, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand and Australia	2011, Germany	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube
Leon	Healthy and sustainable fast food restaurant chain	“Natural fast food”; “At Leon, we believe that food should taste good and do you good. That means food that tastes good, does you good, is affordable and kind to the planet.	Ireland, United Kingdom, United States, Netherlands, Norway	2004. United Kingdom	Facebook, Instagram

Strong Roots	Frozen plant-based foods	“Tasty plant-based food”, “Our mission is to provide plant-based, environmentally responsible, positive food choices, for everyone, for now.”	Ireland, United Kingdom, United States,	2015, Ireland	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
Tony’s Choclonely	Chocolate and confectionery products	“Together we make chocolate 100% slave free”, “Crazy about chocolate, serious about people” “5 sourcing principles”, “Traceable beans”	Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Sweden, and United States	2002, Netherlands	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
5th Season	Freeze dried fruit snack	“High in fibre & no added sugar”; “Retaining > 90% nutritional value”; “100% natural”	Netherlands, United Kingdom,	2017 Netherlands	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter

Table 3.1. Overview of healthy and lifestyle companies (Chipotle, HelloFresh, Leon, Strong Roots, Tony’s Choclonely, 5th Season: retrieved on 28/05/2019).

As sampling and data collection are a crucial step in the transformation from the theoretical design to the practical application of the study, a more detailed explanation for each research method will be presented in the following sections.

3.2.1 Sample and data collection: textual analysis

The overall corpus of texts consisted of the Instagram posts that the brands published or sponsored as part of their marketing strategy. To gather the data, the platform and the official account of the brands were used. The purposive sampling method serves to select the data as it “lies in the very nature of the phenomena qualitative research usually deals with” (Marton, 2013, p. 24). Besides, Flick (2018) explains that selecting only rich information and considering the most appropriate materials are the advantages. In order to well represent the brand initiatives on this social media, to spot overall patterns and to not affect the validity of the study, a total of 200 posts were collected and analyzed (Sterkenburg, Knoppers, & Leeuw, 2012). Also, this number was divided over the 6 brands’ Instagram accounts. Thus, 40 posts per company were collected and

analyzed. Pre-analysis revealed that these brands actively comment on their posts, so both pictures and captions were analyzed.

The time period started from posts published at the beginning of 2017 until the starting date of the study (29/03/2019). The choice to only select recent posts was made for several reasons. First, to be able to compare the Instagram content from each brand based on the same frame period. Indeed, companies such as 5th Season only launched its account in 2017, so with a larger frame, it would not have been possible to compare all the companies identically. It also improved the chance of relating to the same marketing strategy—a longer period would have incorporated content that brands posted while having very different aims. Furthermore, it enabled linking and interconnecting the Instagram activities with the discourse of the marketing representatives. They could relate easier to the intention behind the posts. Next, it limited the chance of having a different person in charge; had that been the case, the respondents would have had more difficulties in explaining previous choices made. Last, the literature has shown that the development of a healthy and conscious lifestyle trend is relatively new, so the selection of older posts would not have been relevant to the topic.

Table 3.2 below presents the sampling in greater detail and provides further information regarding the Instagram account and activity of the six selected brands.

Brands	Instagram profile	Number of posts	Number of followers	Date of the first post
Chipotle	@chipotleuk	699	17.8 k	16/06/2014
HelloFresh	@hellofreshnl	1.875	19.5 k	3/06/2013
Leon	@leonrestaurants	1419	44.4 k	4/09/2013
Strong Roots	@strongrootsirl	812	16.3k	4/06/2015
Tony's Choclonely	@tonyschoclonely_nl	616	60.3k	14/09/2011
5th Season	@5thseasonfruit	236	4.2 k	4/09/2017

Table 3.2. Overview of the Instagram accounts of the Healthy and Lifestyle companies (Instagram, retrieved on 28/05/2019)

As previously mentioned, the selection of Instagram posts intended to grasp the different types of content published on the platform by the brands. For this reason, the selection followed

the maximal variation theory described by Flick (2018). Furthermore, some supplementary criteria served for the constitution of the sample. In addition to the content diversity, and the recent time frame, the posts analyzed represented the most engaging ones which were measured according to the number of likes and comments. As numerous Instagram posts were used to perform the textual analysis and to facilitate the organization of the material and the analysis, the content was collected and saved on "Atlas.ti", because this software offers a large media capacity (e.g. image and text analysis), but also allows the combination of data, the thematic analysis, and constitution of codes directly in the software.

3.2.2. Sample and data collection: in-depth interviews

For this research, one interview with each of the six food companies was conducted in order to collect sufficient data and examples to represent the segment of brands using Instagram as an advertising channel to be perceived as healthy and conscious lifestyle brand. The selection of the brand representative interviewees was also based on purposive sampling. When a study is based on information provided by expert knowledge in the field of interest, it is necessary to define the expertise and position of the interviewees. The professional function of a person or their skill and knowledge of the field can drive the sampling decision (Flick, 2007). Thus, for this study, the interviewees needed to have a managerial position directly linked with the marketing and communication strategy of the company, so they had constructive and insightful information. To obtain useful data, it is essential that the interviewees have a high level of expertise on the topic and grasp the marketing terms used in the questions so that they are able to deliver discerning explanations and well-informed details about their brand strategy. The more dynamic and constructive the conversation was, the more valuable the information was retrieved. Also, when multiple major trends became repetitive during the interviews, and only confirmed insights that had already emerged, the saturation point was reached. These were therefore the sampling criteria that were considered. Because six brands have been interviewed, several common patterns were affirmed after completion, while newly occurred themes emerged from only one or two interviews. Although face-to-face interviews enable a more "intimate understanding of people and their social worlds" (Hermanowicz, 2002, p.480), two out of the six were conducted by phone due to a significant geographical distance. However, there were no misunderstandings and the

conversations were dynamic and interactive. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes to 1 hour and 40 minutes. In order to save and analyze all the conversations, each interview was recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Because that task is time-consuming, the automatic transcription software “Otter.ai” was used. From an ethical perspective, all of the respondents needed to agree on the recording of the conversation and sign informed consent (Brennen, 2012, p.31).

Furthermore, some posts retrieved from the brands’ Instagram page were selected and served as material probes for the interviews. It was particularly useful to ask more details about specific posts, and explanations about inherent oppositions found in the posts. Table 3.3. provides more complete information concerning the interviews and the respondents.

Brands	Interviewees	Position	Interview	Date and place
Chipotle	Racky Diallo & additional information from Jacob Sumner	Local marketing manager Marketing manager Europe	Face-to-face	11/04/2019 Cafe
HelloFresh	Lisa Kapan & Axelle Larroque	Senior community manager, Community manager, French-speaking markets	Face-to-face	10/04/2019 Company’s office
Leon	Otoa Ise	Communications & engagement manager	Phone	30/05/2019 -
Strong Roots	Katie Harrington	Brand Manager	Phone	27/05/2018 -
Tony’s Choclonely	Kirsten Meulman	Online communication manager	Face-to-face	8/05/2018 Company’s office
5th Season	Brigitte Keijzer	Marketing manager	Face-to-face	25/04/2019 Cafe

Table 3.3. Overview of the interviews with brands’ representatives

3.3. Operationalization

Three sub-parts emerged from the division of the main question into the sub-questions. These helped to research the problem by playing a role in the analysis phases and constructing a

valuable answer from the findings. Some dominant concepts derived from the sub-questions. They relate to the selection of healthy and conscious customer groups, the use of advertising appeals, and the communication of specific relevant values by food brands on Instagram. Indeed, the insights discussed in the theoretical framework showed that Instagram was especially relevant when targeting a healthy and conscious audience. Next, the literature argued that the use and trigger of certain appeals in advertising was effective in influencing people's food product perception. Furthermore, it illuminated the way the healthy and conscious lifestyle values were conveyed, addressed and incorporated through the posts.

While the textual analysis enabled an observation of the way food companies tend to be perceived as healthy and conscious lifestyle brands through their Instagram practices, the interviews provided further and more detailed insights about their marketing strategy and intentional uses of the platform. Furthermore, the aim of using combined methods is to compare the findings between the brand marketing representatives' discourses and the practical applications of the strategies represented by the Instagram posts. Moreover, the study of several companies provided more complete answers, notably regarding the different creative ways to translate the image of a healthy and conscious lifestyle brand. An explanation of how the main concepts were made observable will be detailed in the following two sections.

3.3.1 Operationalization of textual analysis

First, textual analysis was processed on a sample of Instagram posts published by the selected brands. This research looked at whether the food brands seem to focus on specific customer segments and to observe their uses of the social platform to promote their products as healthy and conscious. Azungah (2018) suggests that both deductive and inductive approaches provide the opportunity to immerse in the data, make more sense and comprehend major patterns. The literature review showed there are limited previous theories directly investigating the perception of healthy and conscious food brand on Instagram, so the inductive or conventional method was chosen. The codes and categories were defined during the analysis and gathered from the data. The goal was to reveal new insights. Besides, the inductive approach enabled the collection of direct information from the content and avoided the use of preconceived categories (Kondracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002). For these reasons, this research approach leaves space

for the discovery of new insights and stays open to new questions (Hsieh, & Shannon, 2005). Also, as the content might reveal different strategies used on Instagram depending on the brands, the inductive method really helped to stay open to the emergence of new patterns deriving from the posts. In order to not get lost in the data (Schreier 2012, p.58), the key aspects derived from the research question mentioned above were chosen and constituted the base of the coding frame. In this study, particular attention was paid to the consumers, and the healthy and conscious features promoting the brand as part of the lifestyle trend.

Overall, the textual analysis research method served to look at the practical application of the brands' strategies and especially analyze the choices that food companies seem to make to represent themselves as part of the healthy and conscious lifestyle through the platform.

3.3.2. Operationalization of in-depth interviews

After analyzing the brands' Instagram posts which provided an overview of their practical application, in-depth interviews were conducted with marketing representatives from the six selected food brands. This part of the research enabled data to be collected and valuable insights to be gained for the three sub-questions. Therefore, the three major themes or concepts investigated during the conversation were the selection and target audience of healthy and conscious consumers, the use and incorporation of advertising appeals also addressed as brand benefits, and the discourse of specific topics relevant to healthy and conscious lifestyle values. These concepts guided the interviews by determining the topics of conversation and helped to formulate the questions. Moreover, they justified and drove the construction of the topic list (For the complete topic list, see Appendix A page 109).

The interviews were intended to gain insights into how the brands' marketing representatives connected the popularity of the lifestyle trend on Instagram to the healthy and conscious associations created around their products. Indeed, an important aspect of the research was to discern the link between the platform's use and the lifestyle image they want to have as a brand. More specifically, the conversations enabled an observation of the ideas that the brand representatives have on the assemblages of meanings and social dynamic created around the food products posted on the platform affecting their lifestyle image. It also provided information about

the translation of a healthy and conscious image through the implementation of creative strategies in the visual elements and captions.

The questioning gradually narrowed down to the main subjects through the conversation (Brinkmann, Kvale, 2015). It allowed the gathering of contextual information regarding the brands' offers and marketing strategy which was essential in comprehending the ways the marketing representatives use Instagram as an advertising channel. Through the discussion of broad ideas to more specific interrogations, the interviews investigated the topic from a larger to a more detailed view. Pilot interviews ensured the avoidance of misunderstanding and incoherency, and revealed some issues regarding the research of the concepts. Initially, the topic guide was too broad and only based on investigating the promotion and the perception of healthy and conscious food products. However, it was not directly related to the use of advertising appeals and values, so the conversation did not lead to meaningful insights. Therefore, the interview guide was revised before being used during the conversation with the companies.

In order to investigate the topic and gather as many valuable insights as possible, the conversations were guided and followed 7 sections. The first one was focused on getting to know the companies, their offers, and markets in greater detail. This involves the investigation of context and background information regarding the brands. The second section aimed to gather information regarding the general use of SM. For instance, how social media operations were integrated into the marketing strategies and quarterly campaign. The objective of the third section was to understand the uses of Instagram. This was done for example with questions about the management of the channel, the use, and opportunities offered by the platform's tools and features. The fourth section referred to the target of consumer segments on the platform. Here, previous literature about healthy and conscious audiences was notably brought to the discussions. The fifth section investigated the promotion of healthy and conscious food products. Several sub-sections were examined such as the incorporation of specific visual elements, the tone of voice, but also related to SMIs and UGC. The sixth section focused on the incorporation of advertising appeals in the posts, mainly referring to the exploration of rational and emotional brand benefits and their potential connotations. Last, the seventh section aimed to get a deeper understanding of how brand representatives perceive the ways Instagram posts relate to healthy and conscious lifestyle values, e.g. through the integration of certain themes or messages about relevant lifestyle aspects such as wellness.

Thanks to the use of a semi-structured guide, the conversations stayed focused on marketing representatives' thoughts regarding food product advertising on Instagram while they were stimulated to elaborate upon the concepts of the study, referring to both existing and new themes. Furthermore, although the six interviews followed the same topic list, they were not identical because of the differences in the businesses and the variation of themes addressed by the representatives. The in-depth dimension of the interviews made it easier for the respondents to centralize and aim attention to specific advertising intents, for example regarding the aim to trigger certain consumer intentions or beliefs via the incorporation of advertising appeals in their posts. Also, probes were utilized to uncover additional elicited data relevant to the subject of interest. Indeed, peer debriefings such as "Some studies mention that...", but also member checks such as "If I understand well..." were used to reinforce the quality and trustworthiness of the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Overall, the conduct of mixed methods combining textual analysis and in-depth interviews helped to collect and study data informing about both brand intent and practices on Instagram. Furthermore, these qualitative methods followed a constant and comparative process (Furst, Connors, Bisogni, Sobal, & Winter Falk, 1996). Besides, it is important to note that the analysis was ongoing throughout the study. The material gathered from the two methods was analyzed on the basis of an iterative process. This will be further explained in the following section.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data retrieved from both textual analysis and in-depth interviews were used for the analysis. For each food brand interviewed, Instagram posts were retrieved and served to assemble data about the use of Instagram as an advertising channel by certain food brands. Textual analysis supported the appearance of overall themes and aimed to compare the findings with the information retrieved from the conversations. Using in-depth interviews as a second research method allowed the collection of qualitative testimonies from brands using their advertising strategies in Instagram to be perceived as healthy and conscious. Furthermore, it provided better comprehension about the ways these brands created a lifestyle identity via Instagram. Indeed, in-depth interviews allowed me to adapt the conversation but also discover similar or contradictory

online advertising strategies between brands. The advantage of combining these two qualitative research methods was that it provided an unbiased representation of the uses of Instagram as an advertising channel to be perceived as a lifestyle brand. Furthermore, it gave the chance to look at repetitive patterns and later concentrate on the potential links connected with the concepts established during the interviews. Besides, it also prevented issues related to solely concentrating the answer on one standalone statement. Overall, it provided me with the material to enlighten me on the way food businesses relate to their own uses of Instagram.

The data retrieved from both methods have been studied following the process of thematic analysis, using concepts and patterns derived from the theoretical framework. By searching, identifying, reporting and classifying the retrieved information from the data, this method enabled the reporting and analysis of several themes that were present (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Besides, this method is particularly suitable when searching for understanding the meanings of the main patterns of interviews and content. When this method is rigorously performed, it brings out very insightful and trustworthy information (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86). According to Gibson and Brown (2009), the flexibility, accessibility and rapid process of this method of analysis is often used in qualitative research. This approach provided the right process to identify similarities and differences between the interviews, but also connected the given elements and distinguished some recurrent patterns. Furthermore, the thematic analysis enabled the data from both qualitative methods to be associated and gave sense to the findings while helping to answer the research question.

In order to proceed to the thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) indicate the importance of a gradual progression in the analytical process. Also, the study followed the researchers' proposed six-step guide. This consists of getting familiar with the data, creating the initial codes, looking for recurring patterns, processing a review of the main themes, defining the final themes, and constituting and reflecting on the overall analysis (2006). The data from the interviews and the Instagram posts were broken down, examined and categorized through open coding. Each line and visual element was considered as a fragment and given a meaningful name (i.e. code). Following that, the axial codes were determined according to the dominance of certain elements compared to others. The open codes created in the prior step were merged and regrouped into the axial codes, representing the appearance of several main categories. Besides, in order to obtain more valuable insight, it was valuable to not only look at overlapping topics but also

counter and opposite evidence between the cases (Boeije, 2010, p. 109). Finally, the axial codes (i.e. sub-categories) were merged into selective codes. The objective was to relate the dominant topics from the data to theoretical key concepts relevant to the research. These core categories are more abstract but also translate the main findings or messages from the material (Boeije, 2010, p. 117). The analysis composed from these three hierarchical phases is presented by utilizing a coding tree.

Furthermore, in order to provide the best answer to the research question, the analysis was guided by the three main principles of qualitative analysis described by Boeije (2010). Firstly, through the different steps of the research, a constant comparison was drawn in order to allow the observation of variation between the cases. Secondly, when creating the coding tree, analytical induction was processed with the objective to relate the findings to a suitable theoretical framework. Thirdly, proactive attention was given to theoretical sensitivity, with the aim of developing better abilities and creative thoughts when relating the data to theoretical concepts (Boeije, 2010).

3.5. Validity and reliability

Riesman argues that qualitative studies should be convincing, persuasive, reasonable and plausible (Riesman, as cited by Silverman, 2011, p. 351). For this reason, particular attention was paid concerning the validity and reliability of the research throughout the study. Furthermore, Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules (2017) claim the imperativeness of being rigorous and methodical when operating qualitative research in order to improve the traceability of the findings. The authors insist on meeting trustworthiness criteria when performing thematic analysis, which implies being consistent, precise and exhaustive. Following these aims, they suggest following some of the criteria developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), such as credibility, confirmability, dependability, transferability, and reflexivity (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). In light of these insights, multiple measures and procedures were taken during each stage of this research. These notably refer to the realization of pilot tests, the dynamic of power, self-reflexibility, transparency and ethics.

Firstly, concerning the in-depth interviews, several pilot tests were conducted beforehand with peers and colleagues working in marketing, in order to test the understanding of the questions, verify the coherence of each sequence, and the potential value for the topic. Because

the interviews were conducted with branding and marketing professionals, the vocabulary used did not represent a difficulty. Pilot tests were also beneficial because it improved my confidence in the topic and helped me to control and lead the conversations. Indeed, as Hermanowicz (2002) claims, the practice represents one key strategy for insightful interviews.

Regarding the quality of the analysis, Schreier defends that conducting a pilot phase for thematic studies is highly beneficial, and could be implemented in the creation of a coding frame and the execution of trial codes (2014). Thus, a trial coding frame was developed. Operating this approach for the analysis of the Instagram posts allowed me to elaborate a strong final coding frame but also improved the consistency of the coding of the units. This pilot test needed to "cover all types of data and data sources" (Schreier, 2014, p.183). The selected sample was representative and exhaustive for both trial and initial coding. Following that idea, all the types of Instagram posts the brands use as advertising were considered. In order to be coherent, consistent and improve the validity of the study, the categories created during the trial coding were revised (Schreier, 2014). Once the coding frame was definitive, the posts were coded an additional time to prove the right allocation of the units and the justification of the sub-categories. Besides, the data collected was large enough to reveal some determinant patterns and themes. Moreover, regarding the construction of the coding tree, the coding was exhaustive, the sub-categories mutually exclusive, and the categories unidimensional (Schreier, 2013).

Besides, it is important to reflect on the role of power and reflexivity (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). Researchers have shown that the professional position could influence the interview, such as age and gender (Richards & Emslie, 2000). The interviews were conducted with professionals in very senior positions, so my strong confident behavior and deep knowledge about the topic helped to balance the dynamic of power. With the same objective, the interviews were not set in the personal office of the respondents, as a neutral location was most likely to reduce potential background impacts. Additionally, it has been argued that self-reflexivity is valuable for qualitative research (Denzin, as cited by Wong & Poon, 2010). The interpretations of the interplays made during the conversation and the personal thoughts regarding the topic were considered during the analysis because they could influence the reflection (Alvesson, as cited by Hibbert, Coupland, and MacIntosh, 2010). This was especially important during the coding process, for example, to avoid interpretation during the open coding step. Also, during the interviews, it was really necessary to limit assumptions which could have affected the quality of the conversation and consequently of

the overall research. Therefore, even though personal presumptions were constrained as much as possible, the possibility of assumptions was taken into account. Wong and Poon (2010) add that the quality of research can also be impacted by the choices made by the researcher such as the choice of participants, and the questions asked. Therefore, to prevent these effects, the brands, as well as the respondents, were carefully selected according to the sampling criteria.

Furthermore, Tracy (2010) argues that one essential criterion for excellent research is the ethical dimension of the study. For the author of this study, this implied diverse practices. In this study the topic of research was not intimate or sensitive regarding individual data, behaviors or beliefs, yet some information retrieved during the interviews could have been confidential regarding brands' marketing strategies. Therefore, the marketing representative was free to not respond to any questions or request that some information discussed was not revealed. Next to that, they all agreed to their interview being recorded. The terms of the brands' voluntary participation were clearly defined and approved with the signatures of informed consent.

Overall, in regards to the research of Moisander and Valtonen (2006), all the key elements to ensure the credibility of the research were taken into account and implemented. Indeed, in terms of relevance, the topic contributes to existing research by filling existing gaps in the current literature. Regarding the transparency, the theoretical perspectives have been clearly discussed and concepts well defined, the methodological steps taken were explained in detail and their application was consistent and rigorous. Next to that, the research was attentive to and followed the rules of ethics.

4. Results

A total of six food brands were selected for this research. In order to answer the three sub-questions and provide a more complete answer, both textual analysis and interview research methods have been used. Before each company was interviewed, 40 Instagram posts retrieved from their official page were analyzed. Consequently, the total sample size was composed of 6 interviews and 240 posts. The presentation of the results will follow the three sub-questions. First, the target of the LOHAS consumers' segment determined via the health-vigilant and ethically concerned consumers on Instagram will be explained through the first section (sub-question 1). Then, explanations regarding the use of emotional and rational advertising appeals will constitute the focus of the second section (sub-question 2). Last, the third section will reveal the display of a utopian atmosphere, the use of transparency and sustainable commitments, the portrayal of a wellness partner and the enhancement of authenticity, in order to connect healthy and conscious lifestyle values with food products (sub-question 3). The exhaustive analysis of the data used to create these themes are retrieved in a coding tree (see Appendix B, page 112-114).

4.1. LOHAS audience

Two primary themes appeared predominant when answering the first sub-question, "what drives the selection of a specific target audience for an Instagram marketing campaign of healthy and conscious lifestyle food brands?" These were health vigilance and eco-responsibility. For each of these themes, several customer groups emerged and seem highly relevant when designing marketing campaigns for healthy and conscious food products on Instagram.

4.1.1. The health-vigilant consumer

The health vigilant customer group identified by Wansink (2017) seems to appear predominant when looking at the audience target on Instagram for healthy and conscious food brands. Indeed, according to the insights from the textual analysis and the interviews, it seems that as suggested the researcher, these customers have predisposed interest or concerns. Therefore, an active description of how the Nutrition & Calories focus, Micro Food Subcultures, and Sporty groups

are addressed on the Instagram pages of the food brands will be developed below. Also, the reports of these findings will be interpreted and compared with additional studies on the topic.

Nutrition & Calories focus

Wansink (2017) explains in his research that the customers belonging to the health vigilant group are well informed concerning healthy food consumption, but also interested in the nutritional values of the products and their calories intake. Food brands seem to specifically target this category of customers when promoting healthy and conscious lifestyle products. Indeed, according to the data, companies choose specific content to connect with the health vigilant consumer, notably about nutrition and calories. Consequently, the findings appear to support Wansink's idea. A more detailed demonstration of the illustration of this pattern in the data will be explained below. Multiple examples seem to reflect the trends in the data. For instance, in the post representing the snacks, 5th Season clearly indicates the numbers of calories contained in one pack, but also the percentage of fruits (see figure 4.1). It seems that the snack company uses these elements in order to target the health vigilant group.

Besides the direct mention of calories, the demonstration of healthy and well-composed meals including vegetables, proteins and good fat is used on the platform to connect with this audience. Chipotle, for example, not only posts pictures of burritos but also lighter yet still appealing salads. The Mexican food chain clearly indicates the ingredients, focusing on the large portion of vegetables. Furthermore, their comment "To help you choose in the restaurant, we made this one for you" directly relates to clients attentive to their food consumption habits. Moreover, it suggests that the restaurant not only understands and considers them when creating the recipe, but also sends the signal that it is a place for them. This last idea was clarified by Racky, the representative of the brand, during the interview. She explained their will to be able to adapt to all types of consumers, even those who are really specific about their diet or their daily calories intake. Indeed, the really high number of different food combinations makes it possible for customers to personalize their meals according to their preferences. Also, Racky mentioned that the demonstration of healthy characteristics was very important and enhanced in many of their posts: "you have so many options, you can actually use Chipotle for all the new diets. So it's just a good way for everyone. For example, if you have a friend that follow the keto diet, another vegan,

Next to the intended audience concerned by the global nutritional characteristics and calories present in food products, it seems that other alternative diets and customers are aimed at



Figure 4.2. Post retrieved from @leonrestaurant



Figure 4.3. Post retrieved from @leonrestaurant

in the Instagram marketing campaign of healthy and conscious lifestyle food products. Indeed, according to the analysis of the material, some specific food subculture diets, also labeled as micro trends in previous research (Cloake, 2018), appear to be precisely targeted. The textual analysis suggests that food brands specifically design content for consumers following very specific diets such as gluten-free, but also keto, or organic diets. This pattern is illustrated in the majority of the brands' Instagram pages, with the share of suitable recipes or the promotion of relevant products. The posts of 5th Season, for example, show that the brand incorporates the mention "gluten-free" in both visuals and captions. These seem to be used to send a clear signal to the audience. That practice is also applied by Leon with the use of hashtags such as #glutenfree (see figure 4.2), as well as when it explains the origins of this food trend and raises awareness among interested customers. One caption particularly depicted this aspect, saying, "GF isn't a diet just for the Coeliacs. If you are challenged with depression, joint pain, headaches or eczema, gluten could be playing a part and it might be worth going gluten free for a few weeks" (see figure 4.3). The idea of targeting micro food diets on Instagram was confirmed by Racky from Chipotle. She connected the appearance of these micro diets culture with the millennial tendency of desiring to feel unique. Besides, she explains their will to embrace these new food trends, and particularly the keto diet "for example, the keto diet. We make sure that you can have enough good fat but also proteins with avocado and chicken" (Diallo, Chipotle).

Sporty

In addition to the nutrition and diet customer groups, food aspects, the study of the posts reveal that a large number may have been created with the goal of appealing to a sporty audience. Indeed, different elements from the data seem to support this interpretation. The insertion of sports accessories in the pictures such as a basketball (see figure 4.4) might attract the attention of the audience playing that sport, as well as the reference to popular and local sport events (see figure 4.7). The partnership with a sporty event like the Virgin Sport Run Club (see figure 4.5) might interest customers who run. Moreover, the use of sport-related hashtags such as #strenghtfeed, #preworkout #protein (see figure 4.6) enables the brand to be easily found and categorized by the audience.

During the interview, Racky (Chipotle) confirmed this pattern explaining that it is their aim to be perceived as perfectly adapted to all customers. One of their main objectives is to show to the sporty customers that the meals will support their needs regarding food and particularly protein intake. She said: “we target sporty people that take care of their body, are healthy and can train every day” (Diallo, Chipotle). Furthermore, this category reflects the point of view of Hills (2018), who argues that regular exercise reinforces physical health, but also that exercise represents an essential component of a healthy lifestyle. Consequently, the strong connection between health and sport makes clear that health vigilant consumers have more chance of being interested in sport-related content.

Although the analysis of the data suggests that Instagram marketing campaigns of healthy and conscious lifestyle food products is targeting health vigilant customers, such as audiences concerned by their nutrition, following specific subculture diets and sporty, it appears that the supplementary customers' group with different concerns is targeted. Thereupon, an active description and interpretation of this audience will be developed through the rest of the chapter.



Figure 4.4 Post retrieved from @chipotleuk



Figure 4.5. Post retrieved from @chipotleuk

segments in their marketing strategy, but “just everyone that love chocolate. What every chocolate eating human actually. So we don't have like women from 20 to 30 something segment dated like that” (Kirsten, Tony’s Chocolonely). However, it seems that some elements retrieved from Instagram appear particularly relevant to the audience concerned by working conditions. Indeed, in addition to their mission to produce slave-free chocolate, Tony's Chocolonely strongly militates against child labor, which is a common practice in the industry. They not only lead their own action but also vigorously encourage the audience to join in their fight. Therefore, the content posted for this purpose seems to be compelling for customers concerned with these issues. For example, in the caption of a post published on December 9th, the brand expressively invites and encourages the audience to sign a petition against child labor (see figure 8). This type of comment will possibly seem relevant and interesting for the audience sharing this attention to the cause, but might also lead them to understand the company in more detail.

Following the research of Lerro, Vecchio, Caracciolo, Pascucci, and Cembalo (2018), this pattern corresponds to one important aspect for the audience attentive to corporate social responsibility practices. Therefore, this subcategory appears to be in accordance with previous research on conscious customer groups but also reinforces the main theme focusing on an audience attentive to CSR. Working conditions defenders are a targeted audience by brands promoting healthy and conscious products. However, the results show that the posts appear to be addressed to additional customer segments related to the attention of CSR practices. These will be exposed in the following sections.



Figure 4.8. Post retrieved from @tonyschocolonely_nl

Environmental concern

The textual analysis clearly illustrates the will to target environmentally concerned audiences when promoting healthy and conscious food products on Instagram. Also, several topics are recurrent such as the reduction of food waste, packaging recycling, preservation of nature, reduction of energy use and limitation of CO₂ emissions. Although the interviews indicate that the majority of the selected companies embrace many of these topics in their commercial activity, some brands more than others seem to communicate about them and use them to attract the audience through their Instagram page. The analysis of the posts shows that Leon and HelloFresh seem to actively implement elements referring to customers concerned by the environmental cause. For example, in one of their posts, HelloFresh show a picture of several aromatic plants planted in second-hand vases such as old tin cans and gives tips about how to accommodate food leftovers in the caption (see figure 9). By providing inspirational ideas about the reduction of packaging and food waste, the brand might draw the attention of this audience. A second example can be taken from Leon's Instagram publications. On January 7th, they published a picture of a popular brand reusable cup of coffee and through the caption invited clients to bring their own cup (see Leon-16, see figure 4.9). Even though the environmental aspect is not directly expressed, the audience concerned by the protection of the planet will probably have a better opinion of the company.



Figure 4.9. Retrieved from @hellofreshnl

Vegan & Vegetarian

Vegan and vegetarian audiences appear to be clearly targeted by companies on their Instagram marketing campaigns promoting healthy and conscious products. The textual analysis of the 240 posts revealed that more than 20% of the publications included content relevant to them. Indeed, of the six brands studied, five create content specifically related to these groups. Different

aspects are used by brands when aiming to reach this customer group. In addition to the adoption of terms such as “veganuary” (see figure 4.10) and the use of specific hashtags, there is the presentation of suitable products like “vegan braised tofu” (see figure 4.11), adapted recipes such a post from Leon giving the idea of replacing the cream to make a dairy-free soup recipe (see figure 4.12) but also tips concerning the replacement of meat as shown in a post from HelloFresh, explaining how to replace 100g of meat (see figure 4.13). Also, Katie, brand representative of StrongRoots, explained their choice for using the word plant-based instead of vegan or vegetarian: “Essentially, plant-based is vegan. And you know, it's about bringing as many people on the journey as possible. And, you know, perhaps plant-based is more welcoming” (Harrington, Strong Roots).



Figure 4.12. Retrieved from @leonrestaurant



Figure 4.11. Retrieved from @chipotleuk



Figure 4.13 Retrieved from @hellofreshnl

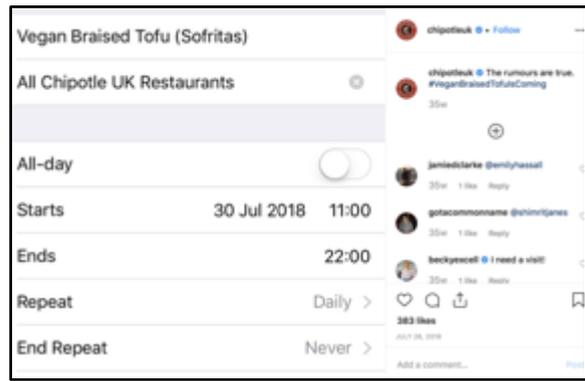


Figure 4.10. Retrieved from @chipotleuk

4.2. Advertising appeals

From the analysis of the collected material, two types of advertising appeals are used in order to promote healthy and conscious lifestyle food products on Instagram. The first dominant theme represents emotional benefits, while the second clusters around diverse rational benefits. These will be explained in more detailed below.

4.2.1. The emotional benefits

This dominant theme refers to the hedonic benefits that brands can provide to customers. In comparison with the functional appeal, this theme strives to describe the underlying feelings that the audience looks for when using healthy and conscious food products. Several emotional benefits occurred and seem to influence their perception by the audience on Instagram. These are categorized between pleasure, self-conscious emotions, community, and lastly, the fun of discovery. Overall, it seems clear that through Instagram, the brands either strive to limit bad sentiments or reinforce positive ones.

Pleasure

The first strong emotional benefit refers to the dimension of pleasure. Appealing food impacts and motivates sentiments of pleasure-producing food consumption and stimulates desire (Hill, 2007). Although the simple thought of tempting food can create craving and stimuli, the search for pleasant appetite experiences can be reinforced by the combination of imagination and visuals (Moore & Konrath, 2014). Thus, this emotional reaction highly impacts individuals in their consumption behavior, increasing the likelihood of choosing appealing products (Siwik & Senf, 2006). Both insights from the interviews and the posts endorse the idea of Pettigrew (2016) that emphasizing pleasure is an efficient way to promote food products. Indeed, different aspects are incorporated in that emotional dimension.

First, the use of multi-sensory appeals including the notions of smell, but also taste, appearance, and feelings connected to food responses confirm the use of pleasure as a strong emotional benefit. Many visuals from the posts analyzed present very appealing dishes or products. For example, Tony's Chocolonely published numerous photos of the chocolate bars and the brand

rep expressed during the interview its strong impact on customers, saying “especially naked. We call it naked bar. When you see that people get crazy” (Kirsten, Tony’s Chocolonely). The material indicated confirms that the emotional benefits connected to the pleasure are represented by several aspects such as the anticipation, the reward of the preparation process, and the consumption (Kringelbach et al., 2012; Sneijder and Te Molder, 2006; Somers et al., 2014). Strong Root for instance emphasizes the notion of pleasure, describing texture and posting a very appealing picture of chocolate cake (see figure 4.14). This same idea was also shared by Otoa Ise, brand representative of Leon, who stated that the connotation of pleasure related to food could take different forms in the messaging: “Sometimes it’s a flavor, sometimes it is a smell. It comes out as the wind is cooked” (Ise, Leon).

Moreover, the pleasure associated with the experience and the memories revealed through the research of Rode, Rozin, & Durlach (2007) also appears to be adopted by brands. Indeed, by presenting pictures of a very appealing and lovely prepared breakfast in bed, HelloFresh might play with the personal experiences of the wishes of the audience (see figure 4.15). Customers could associate this post with previous nice times or with desires. Overall, these examples support that the implementation of pleasure is part of the marketing appeals used to promote healthy and conscious food products. Furthermore, the sensation of pleasure appears to particularly related to additional emotions. This will be explained in the next section.



Figure 4.15. Retrieved from @hellofreshnl



Figure 4.14. Post retrieved from @strongrootsirl

Self-conscious emotions

According to the analysis of the data, multiple self-conscious emotions are used in the promotion of healthy and conscious lifestyle food product on Instagram. These feelings refer to the

critical evaluation of the self as well as comparison with self-representation regarding personally judged standards (Robins, Richard & Schriber, Roberta, 2009). The selected companies strive to implement and induce this emotion via their Instagram content. Two specific self-conscious emotions appear to be particularly used as advertising appeal: pride and guilt.

The limitation of guilt appears to be a major emotional benefit advertised within the promotion of healthy and conscious food products. Also, according to the study of the brands' Instagram posts, this emotion particularly relates to the notion of pleasure explained above. The feeling of guilt is negative and relates to the personal evaluation of behaviors. Although it is a common feeling when it comes to food consumption, individuals seek to avoid it in order to limit negative self-conscious emotions (Isen 2000; Larsen 2000). In accordance with the findings of Onwezen, Bartels, and Antonides (2014), and Hynie, MacDonald, and Marques (2006), claiming that healthy and sustainable food consumption is moderated by the anticipated guilt, the different materials indicate that the limitation of guilt is an emotional benefit that customers seek in the consumption of health and conscious food products. The use of these emotional benefits connected with the notion of pleasure is particularly noticeable in a post from 5th Season's Instagram page. The brand posted a picture of a delicious and very beautiful homemade chocolate bar made with dark chocolate, quinoa and strawberries, indicated where to find the recipe, and added the hashtag "#guilty pleasure" to the caption. Also, choosing basic chocolate could have been perceived as a guilty decision for the consumers, but the incorporation of healthy ingredients and the approbation by the brand seem to limit the negative feelings related to the emotion of guilt (see figure 4.16).

Closely associated with the guilt limitation, the pride stimulation refers to the anticipated positive self-conscience of the customers. As Onwezen, Bartels, and Antonides (2014) argue, pride is an emotion encouraging people in their personal goals, and consequently affects positively healthy and sustainable consumption choices. Furthermore, regarding the promotion of healthy and conscious lifestyle food products, this positive feeling seems to be related to the ethical dimension. Indeed, according to the textual analysis, brands tend to stimulate customer pride by implementing the idea that by choosing one of their products, they will serve a good cause, in favor of the planet or people. Several elements retrieved from the material can illustrate this interpretation. For instance, Leon seems to stimulate pride by focusing on the environmental benefits of customers' choices. This can be visible in one of their captions of the post dating from

March 2nd, 2019. By explaining that their coffee sales enable the protection of the rainforest, and thanking their customers for helping them protect plants and animals, the company show the importance of their choice and valorizes their decision (see figure 4.17). Thus, the customer might feel pride when choosing to consume Leon’s coffee. Furthermore, this finding relates to the article from Bellin, Wollan, and Zealley (2018) explaining that marketers should implement the notion of pride in their strategy.

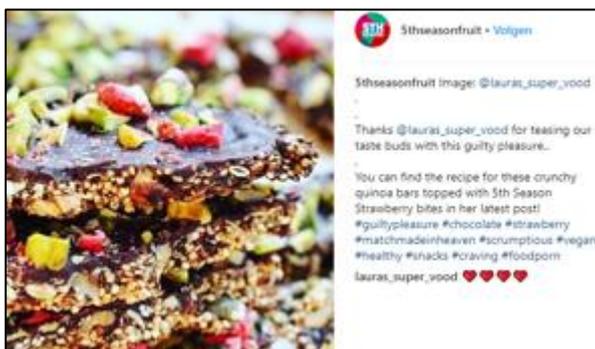


Figure 4.16. Retrieved from @5thseasonfruit



Figure 4.17. Retrieved from @leonrestaurant

Community

Besides the benefits relating to pleasure and the self-conscious evaluation of behavior, the desire to be associated with a community appears as a strong emotional appeal in the promotion of healthy and conscious lifestyle food products. Following the idea that one of the food choice drivers resides in the solicitation of belonging to groups (Nicolaou, et al., 2009), the analysis of posts reveals the connotation between the consumption of healthy and conscious food products and the feeling of belonging and identification to a group. This can notably be captured through the sharing of hobbies, friendly, supportive interaction, but also the demonstration of care and interest. For example, it seems that 5th Season really tries to create a relationship with its audience. Looking at their posts and especially captions, it feels that it is a simple conversation between friends e.g. the captions “What are you up to this weekend? We are off to ride some good waves” and “If you have the Sunday blues, our tropical pineapple bites are there to take you to the Caribbean! Marthe is waiting for you” (see figure 4.18).

This idea was also confirmed by the respondents, mostly regarding the audience's desire to belong to the healthy and conscious group of consumers, and the impact of the consumption of certain products or brand usage on self and peer perception. Furthermore, this dimension of community is particularly facilitated with the use of UGC and SMI posts as they directly connect the

audience via the share of personal experiences with healthy and conscious products (Ramirez, Gau, Hadjimarcou & Xu, 2018). Indeed, the majority of the brands selected repost influencers or customers' posts. Many posts retrieved from 5th Season were not originally created by the brand e.g. they reposted a picture from the influencer @gracecaretcaron where the product was incorporated in a breakfast (see figure 4.19). Moreover, this category seems to support the research claiming that companies should create an alliance with customers and make them feel involved in their work (Bellin, Wollan & Zealley, 2018).

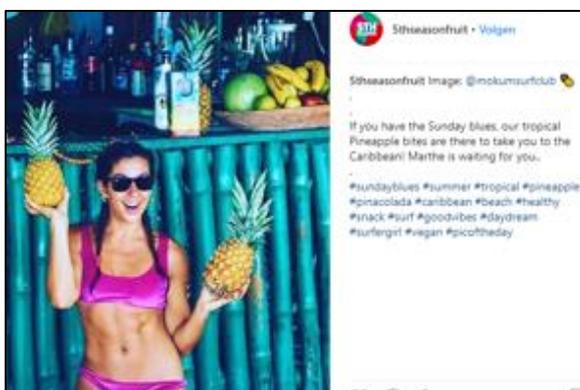


Figure 4.18. Retrieved from @5thseasonfruit



Figure 4.19. Retrieved from @5thseasonfruit

Fun of discovery

The last emotional benefit appearing from the analysis of both materials is the sub-theme of fun of discovery. From the retrieved posts, it seems clear that brands accentuate this idea with the emphasis of novelty such as with the introduction of new products, but also inspirational food ideas, and the promotion of innovative processes. For instance, 5th Season highlights its freeze-dried conservation method on its Instagram page. The brand often mentions the benefits of its very specific process in its captions, for example the comment “Giving nutrition advice on the different types of dried fruit and why freeze-drying is the best alternative to fresh fruits” (see figure 4.20). In addition to that, these brand benefits are strengthened by the creation of excitement and curiosity, which is really noticeable in many posts of Tony’s Chocolonely, mainly concerning the launch of new products. For example, one post focuses on making the audience guess a new chocolate flavor. In the caption, the brand creates customer implication, excitement but also curiosity by highlighting the moment the flavor will be revealed, but also by asking the audience to guess “two nights to sleep, then we will reveal the limited-edition flavors. Hint, hint, do you guess the second taste?”

(see figure 4.21). Moreover, the representative of this brand acknowledges this dimension by explaining that because Tony's Chocolonely is not using any paid advertising, the social channel is the only way to promote new product launches. "We decided we don't do any paid media. So we never do commercials, we don't do radio group, even Facebook or Instagram, paid advertising posts. Everything is organic" (Kirsten, Tony's Chocolonely).



Figure 4.21. Retrieved from @tonyschocolonely_nl



Figure 4.20. Retrieved from @5thseasonfruit

In light of these insights, it can be seen that emotional benefits are used as an advertising appeal to promote healthy and conscious lifestyle food products on Instagram. These appear to be most dominantly triggered by self-conscious emotions, the notion of pleasure, the focus on supportive community and the discovery. However, other types of benefits are also used for these products. They will constitute the focal points of the next sections.

4.2.2. The rational benefits

Besides the use of emotional benefits, the promotion of healthy and conscious food products on Instagram is articulated through the advertisement of rational benefits. These are often linked to direct and basic motivation levels related to specific needs, involving more verifiable information or providing clear assets (Zhang, Sun, Liu & Knight, 2014). Also labeled as utilitarian or functional, these benefits bring more straightforward answers to customers and are connected with the notion of objectivity (Stafford, 2005). According to the analysis of the data, three rational benefits play an advertising role: quality, convenience, and expertise.

Quality

The posts particularly revealed the importance and insistence by the brands on the quality as the main benefit for the promotion of healthy and conscious lifestyle products. Indeed, all the brands selected for this study emphasize this focus on their Instagram page. More specifically, quality is indicated through different aspects such as the appearance, texture, ingredients, provenance and preparation method. For example, in one of their posts, HelloFresh informed customers about the quality of the plums included in their Fruitbox. Instead of just posting a big picture of the fruit, they also explain in further detail in the caption the provenance of their prunes but also what makes the difference between those sold in basic supermarkets. The post says (translated from the Dutch): “Save the plums of farmer Kees! They are juicy, sun-ripened plums, however, due to the heat 3 mm too small to sell, say supermarkets: 60,000 kilos in total. We are taking action and next week are putting small (but nice) plums in the Fruitbox!” (see figure 4.22). This combination of these visual elements with additional information in the captions falls in line with the claim of Johar and Sirgy (1991), arguing that one way to increase the rational appeal of a product is to incorporate quality elements or suggestive messages.



Figure 4.22. Post retrieved from @hellofreshnl

Convenience

Numerous examples from Instagram posts and mentions from the respondents convey the idea that communicating about convenient benefits is useful when promoting healthy and conscious lifestyle products. From the materials' insights and the previous literature, it appears important to show to the customers that consuming healthy and conscious food no longer means lots of effort or time. This dimension occurs in the content and the discussions with emphasis on

the rapid preparation, as we can particularly see through the Instagram page of HelloFresh and Chipotle. These brands demonstrate that with their products, it is very easy to eat well even with a short amount of time. One example of this is the demonstration of fresh burritos rapidly made and wrapped by Chipotle. Also, during the interview, Chipotle's representative underlined this aspect, saying “And we really want to make sure that people understand that it's possible to eat on the go”, and “So in an average a burrito plate is made in 30 seconds. So, it takes 30 seconds for you to order and to pay for it.” This was also emphasized during the interview with HelloFresh where the respondent explained that: “You have to be less of an expert. You can do it super quickly. And in line with what you desire to have more of these ready-made or superfast issues” (Kapan, HelloFresh). This idea of eating well with the least amount of effort was also found in Strong Roots' posts, such as with the caption “Eating well does not have to be an effort!” (see figure 4.24).

Also related to the convenience of the products, the transportable features appear to be an important aspect in the promotion of healthy and conscious lifestyle products, mostly concerning the snacks. For example, from the textual analysis, 5th Season focuses on the easily transportable feature of their products. This is notably visible in the post showing a packet of freeze-dried fruits grabbed during a bike ride (see figure 4.23). Furthermore, the portion size also appears as part of the convenience. This is markedly expressed during the interviews. Indeed, the marketing representatives of HelloFresh insisted on the importance of informing about the flexibility of the subscription, saying “So aside from these meals that you can choose in your box, you can also order wine is a big thing we're pushing right now, you can also order fruit, fruit box, which is available in different sizes” (Kapan, Hellofresh). Along the same lines, Katie, brand representative of Strong Roots, explained that they provide "great tasting, quick, convenient products. That's kind of our commitments” (Harrington, Strong Roots).



Figure 4.23. Post retrieved from @5thseasonfruit



Figure 4.24. Post retrieved from @strongrootsirl

Expertise

Last, the findings actively underline the occurrence of expertise as a dominant rational benefit. This product appeal is more closely related to the expertise of the brand in general than to a specific food product. Both the healthy and the conscious dimensions iterate a part of knowledge and skills, such as in terms of nutritional aspects, recipe or supply management. Although the expertise automatically comes out or is indicated by the quality of the end food products, some additional elements and information reinforced this specific appeal on Instagram. Indeed, connotations or assumptions regarding the companies' abilities, experiences, and popularity appear to be particularly supportive of this benefit. For example, Chipotle tends to emphasize their mastery of fast and well-done preparation. One of their posts is a picture of their team looking very serious and holding a trophy, a symbol of victory. Next to that, the caption "This is Mike and his Wardour Street team, they are the fastest burrito rollers in London" reinforces their strong ability at their job and connotes a high likelihood of client satisfaction (see figure 4.25). Also, the winning of the contest seems to be used to reinforce the expertise of the companies, as shown for example in one post from Strong Roots, revealing their victory in the Great Taste Award (see figure 4.26).

Moreover, this demonstration of expertise is particularly enhanced by the use of collaborations and partnerships. Indeed, the majority of the companies selected for this study present numerous partnerships with similar brands but also famous events. For example, Chipotle has developed really meaningful partnerships, as shown by many associated pictures and logos on their posts. Also, the representative of the brand indicated the importance of specific partners, saying: "We also make sure that we are very smart about the partnership that we choose. Also, for example, Adidas or Roland Garros, or yeah Adidas also has this", but also mentioning that partners should reinforce their expertise and correspond to their brand's DNA (Diallo, Chipotle).



Figure 4.25. Retrieved from @chipotleuk



Figure 4.26. Post retrieved from @strongrootsirl

Overall, the emphasis on the quality, convenience and expertise aspects reinforce the use of rational brand benefits as advertising appeal for the promotion of healthy and conscious lifestyle food products on Instagram.

4.3. Healthy and conscious lifestyle value

Five main themes emerge from the material when looking at the ways food brands connect the values of a healthy and conscious lifestyle to their product on Instagram. These refer to the display of a utopian atmosphere, transparency, and sustainable commitments, becoming a wellness partner, challenging beliefs, and enhancing authenticity. This constitution of dominant patterns is supported by the appearance of sub-categories developed from both interviews and textual analysis findings. These will be further explained below.

4.3.1. Utopian Atmosphere

According to the qualitative analysis, food brands display a utopian atmosphere through their Instagram activity in order to relate to the idea of a healthy and conscious lifestyle trend. Indeed, it seems that the portrayal of ideal surroundings is positively impacted by the symbiosis of plural elements referring to the physical and social settings. This interpretation concurs with the research of Mont, Neuvonen, and Lähteenoja (2014), reporting the significance of the global environmental dimension in the evolution of sustainable lifestyles. Several subcategories emanating from the material endorse the appearance of this theme. These are the synergy between the purity of nature and urban environments, the portrayal of model ways of life, human harmony, the smooth integration of technology and challenging preconceived beliefs.

Synergy between the purity of nature and urban environments

First, the review of the findings indicates that through their Instagram content, food brands establish a utopian atmosphere by showing a perfect combination between the purity of nature and urban environments. Indeed, looking at the visual background represented in the selected posts, the brands combine numerous natural elements or tones through the use of neutral colors and wooden material in their accessories, but also the insertion of plants, vegetation and pictures

of specific landscapes. For example, in most of their posts, HelloFresh uses very neutral color plates and kitchen accessories. Also, they often incorporate plants or vegetation in their pictures. One of the posts that particularly fits the use of elements was posted by the brand on August 28th, 2018, showing a baking tray full of roasted vegetables, a wooden worktop, a wooden spoon, neutral-color towels and a plant on the side (see figure 4.27). By contrast, brands also depict very urban environments and related elements such as streets, a city center, or transport. For instance, one of Chipotle's posts shows two men grabbing lunch on a concrete staircase, with graffiti on the wall. Even though it is not sure or clearly mentioned that this picture was taken in a big metropolis, the presented elements emphasize this impression (see figure 4.28). Although these two settings are seemingly contradictory, they complement each other. Indeed, despite the opposition of the notions behind nature (most notably calm, serenity and purity) and the notions behind cities (such as speed, vibrancy and diversity), their association creates an idyllic atmosphere. This is also supported by the idea that when united, these two environments create a perfect balance.

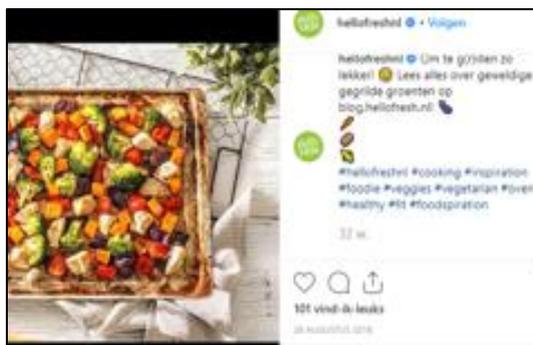


Figure 4.27. Post retrieved from @hellofreshnl



Figure 4.28. Post retrieved from @chipotleuk

Smooth technology integration

Complementary to the previous category, the data presents the perception of a smooth integration of technology which also reinforces the display of a utopian atmosphere. HelloFresh but also Chipotle and 5th Season embrace the use of devices in their posts. For example, 5th Season shows in one of its posts the corner of a laptop next to a magazine (see figure 4.29), Chipotle shows a smartphone on a wooden table next to a plate (see figure 4.30). Indeed, in many posts, digital devices are present but not omnipresent. By this, I suggest that as it is normal technology that appears in the images as they are used in our everyday lives, it is not intrusive and does not monopolize our attention. This interpretation refers to the current issues of digital distraction

explained by Dr. Anastasia Dedyukhina during her conference Neuroscience of digital distractions in Amsterdam. This sub-theme aligns with Mont, Neuvonen, and Lähteenoja (2014), who argue that technical innovations are in a way increasing the quality of life but also Mont and Power (2013) saying that innovations are keys to sustaining our ways of life and developing wellbeing. Moreover, assimilating smooth technology integrations as a component of the idea portraying a utopian atmosphere relates to the research of Jackson (2005) and Seyfang (2009) which indicates that stimulating and integrating technical innovation in our life is necessary as it can improve our lifestyle, for instance, in terms of life organization.



Figure 4.29. Post retrieved from @5thseasonfruit



Figure 4.30. Post retrieved from @chipotleuk

Portrayal of model ways of life

Then, the theme utopian atmosphere is supported by the subcategory referring to the portrayal of a model way of life. Via their Instagram channel, the selected food brands depict an exemplary and desirable existence. Indeed, the concepts of wellness and positivity characterizing the healthy and conscious lifestyle are visible in the Instagram posts and feature in the interviews. Several aspects connoting a model life are particularly noticeable in the empirical materials through connotations of a happy personal and professional life. For example, with elements suggesting a successful professional career such as insinuated by the caption “Monday planning meeting” posted by Chipotle (see figure 4.31), but also a good organization as 5th Season suggests through the incorporation of planning and corporate accessories (see figure 4.32). Moreover, the portrayal of a model way of life is supported by showing the importance of having an active social life, be it romance-wise, or happy with one's family. These patterns are for instance perceptible when the brands insinuate or ask with whom the audience would like to share their snacks, meal, or chocolate. This idea was also explained by Lisa, HelloFresh's brand representative, during the

interview, when she stated: “we're focusing nowadays on sharing the joy, which means that there's something about cooking together having a great moment at dinner, and really enjoying choosing the meal but also cooking and having the family as well” (Kapan, HelloFresh).



Figure 4.32. Post retrieved from @5thseasonfruit



Figure 4.31. Post retrieved from @chipotleuk

Challenge preconceived beliefs.

According to the interpretation of the data, several elements relate to an additional attempt by the food brands to connect healthy and conscious lifestyle values with their products on Instagram. This refers to the will to challenge preconceived beliefs. As with many components retrieved from the Instagram page, it seems valuable to study this pattern in more detail, but also understand how it endorses the development of the theme of a utopian atmosphere. This constitutes the last sub-theme of this section. Although several aspects and cases are behind the theme of challenging preconceived beliefs, it clusters similar ideas demonstrating the brands' will to refute assumptions, mostly regarding food habits and industry. The analysis of the Instagram content and the interviews indicates that brands seeking to be perceived as healthy and conscious are most likely to promote a new dimension in the industry such as rejecting the beliefs that healthy and conscious food cannot be related to pleasure, and that fast-food is a synonym of unhealthy. Many of these aspects were represented through the Instagram pages of the brands.

Indeed, it seems that one of the very important missions of Chipotle is to inform that fast food can also rhyme with healthy and fresh meals. For instance, in their visuals, they use elements that are normally symbols of unhealthy fast food chains, but they always relate to nutrition, quality or freshness of the products. For example, they posted a picture of a quickly made burrito salad, but they indicate in the caption “Your lunch tradition deserves real nutrition” (see figure 4.33). Furthermore, the brand also uses the hashtags #fresh, #pure and #fast in almost all of their posts,

which reinforces the connection of terms that were previously incompatible. Following this same idea Otoa, Leon's brand representative, explained during the interview their will to “show a different fast food, and to show that it's possible to eat well, but also quick” (Ise, Leon). 5th Season intends to give a new image to snacking habits but also to fruit consumption. Indeed, aside from presenting their products as a healthy snack on their Instagram page, Brigitte Keijzer, the brand's representative, added during the interview that: “Fruit are people's favorite snack; however, it can be hard to eat it. You have to slice, cut, sometimes it's not ripe and it is quite expensive as well. Our product is the perfect solution for people that want to eat healthily, and eat more fruit” (Keijzer, 5th Season). The will to challenge preconceived beliefs was also expressed during the interview with the Strong Roots brand representative, where she explained that changing the perception about frozen and vegetarian food represented one of their challenges. “You know, people have this preconceived idea that first, the frozen food can be quite bland, they also have this idea that vegetarian food is very processed, or wouldn't be very tasty” (Harrington, Strong Roots).

This link between this category and the theme of utopian atmosphere hinges on the idea that in an ideal world, the false presumption would not exist, and healthy and conscious food choices would always be possible. Moreover, following this logic, brands appear as healthy and conscious lifestyle guardian angels or lifesavers. Furthermore, this overall tendency seems to be close to the approaches used in the marketing strategy of industry disruptors. Indeed, challenging the industry or rethinking its boundaries not only enables competition with the traditional players (i.e. competitors) but also to seduce new customers that were not interested until then (Turpin, 2018). Furthermore, the creation or redefinition of new ecosystems takes their origins from innovative processes and associations (Carayannis, Sindakis, & Walter, 2015), which can also be generated by unconventional, progressive or experimental ideas.



Figure 4.33. Post retrieved from @chipotleuk

In the light of these results, it is clear to me that one of the ways that food brands connect healthy and conscious lifestyle values with food products on Instagram is to depict the portrayal of a utopian atmosphere. Several additional approaches seem to be identifiable through the data. The detail of each of them will be presented in the next sections.

4.3.2. Transparency & Sustainable Commitments

From the analysis of both interviews with the brands and textual analysis, it is clear that one way to connect the healthy and conscious lifestyle values with food products on Instagram is to emphasize commitments to transparency and sustainability. This constitutes the second dominant theme. Consumers, especially the audience interested in or participating in the healthy and conscious lifestyle trend, are extremely sensitive to the ethical and environmental impacts of production. Indeed, according to Radice (2017), the audience's solicitation for more transparency and clarity represents one of the main aspects behind the new healthy and conscious trend. Therefore, it is sensible that brands utilize these preoccupations in their communication on Instagram. Several subcategories instigate that pattern: the support of diversity and equality, environmental concerns, fair trade activism, production traceability, and freshness. These will be further explained below, actively supported by examples extracted from the material.

Environmental concerns

As show in previous research (Onwezen, Bartels, & Antonides, 2014), but also the recurrent topics in media, attention for the environmental impacts of food production has increased and become a serious global concern. The consideration of related current and upcoming issues appears to be used by brands as a way to communicate positively about their products on Instagram. More particularly, it appears to be an appropriate aspect to relate to when demonstrating transparency and sustainability commitments. Many examples from the material support this idea. From the textual analysis, HelloFresh show its concerns regarding the environment when supporting the reduction of meat consumption. In addition to the promotion of their partnership with the event “national week without meat”, they post educational content such as infographics explaining to consumers how to replace the proteins from meat (see figure 4.34) but also informing about the positive impact on the planet, especially in term of saving energy. The reduction of waste but also

the recycling of packaging appear as recurrent patterns used by brands to show their environmental commitment. Tony's Chocolonely shows its involvement on Instagram by posting a picture of a few team members participating in World Clean Up Day, and cleaning the canals of Amsterdam (see figure 4.35).



Figure 4.34. Post retrieved from @hellofreshnl



Figure 4.35. Post retrieved from @tonyschocolonely_ni

Production traceability

Another aspect deriving from the data that supports the theme of transparency & sustainable commitments is production traceability. Many visual and descriptive elements retrieved from the data relate to the origin of the products and the parties involved in the production stages. From the analysis of the posts, Tony's Chocolonely extensively communicates about the production farms, but also partner cooperatives such as ECOJAB (see figure 4.36), and countries like Ghana (see figure 4.37) where the cocoa is cultivated. Indeed, the brand posts a very large number of photos of the production sites in Africa on the social platform, but also indicates specific places such as the farmers from Kapatchiva (see figure 4.38). This choice of insisting on product traceability was also explained by the brand during the interview. Kirsten, the brand representative, indicated their will to show their responsibilities as a chocolate company and informed that "we implemented our own our way of working and for traceable beings and we have five sourcing principles" (see Kirsten, Tony's Chocolonely).

Furthermore, traceability can also be associated with the notion of local. Indeed, food or ingredients produced close geographically tend to be easily traceable. However, only a few examples referring to locality were expressed. One of them is the post published by HelloFresh about a mussel farm called Zeker Zeeuwse located in the province of Zeeland. Indeed, from the interpretation of this post, it seems that the meal box company aims to inform and promote the locality of its suppliers. Furthermore, the caption indicates the possibility of finding more information from the blog. This notion of locality appears to be little used by the

brands when evoking the traceability comparing to what previous studies suggested (Dunning, Bloom, & Creamer, 2015).



Figure 4.36. Post retrieved from @tonyschocolonely_n1



Figure 4.37. Post retrieved from @tonyschocolonely_n1



Figure 4.38. Post retrieved from @tonyschocolonely_n1

Fairtrade activism

Also interconnected with the production process, another subcategory plays a role in strengthening the theme of Transparency & Sustainable Commitments: several findings from the analysis show a desire from the brands to indicate their fair trade production and support on Instagram. Tony's Chokolonely is particularly representative of this pattern, with their main mission of making 100% of the chocolate industry slave free. Indeed, during the conversation, Kirsten, the brand's social media manager, expressed several times what I interpreted as their mantra: "Tony's is not a chocolate company making impacts, Tony's is an impact company making chocolate" (Kirsten, Tony's Chokolonely). Looking at their Instagram posts, their fair-trade activism mission is very obvious. According to the interview and the analysis of their photos and captions, the company aims to raise awareness about child labor, celebrate more ethical consumption, create awareness about current world issues and inform about actions taken (see figure 4.39 and 4.40). Following the findings, I decided to label this fair-trade activism. Indeed, from the answers of the

respondents but also the textual analysis, it seems clear that the food brands use legal and equitable trade content as one of the pillars to show their dedication to transparency. In fact, it appears that companies want to play an active role in defending the producers and their rights, and thus also inform and encourage the audience regarding this cause.



Figure 4.39. Post retrieved from @tonyschocolonely_nl



Figure 4.40. Post retrieved from @tonyschocolonely_nl

Freshness

The last category extracted from the data refers to freshness. The majority of the companies selected use the freshness aspect when promoting their offers on Instagram. Also, many elements refer to this pattern, indicating the recent product preparation or harvesting of ingredients. Indeed, the link with the transparency is particularly visible through the presentation of raw products, demonstration of recipes being made, kitchen settings, and staff members. HelloFresh, for example, very frequently incorporates two elements commonly related to freshness in their posts: one, fruit and vegetables; and two, the color green. One of the posts most clearly illustrating this tendency is a photo of a green smoothie with mint posted by the brand on September 22nd, 2018 (see figure 4.41). Another example of the representation of freshness in Instagram can be taken from the data retrieved from Chipotle's page. Although many of their posts relate to this term, one fits particularly. It is a photo showing the preparation of guacamole in the restaurant. Next to the visual is added the caption "Your kitchen has more freezers than ours" (see figure 42). It seems that the brand wants to emphasize the freshness of their products by showing that all the ingredients used are fresh, and not frozen, but also that everything is prepared on site.

Additionally, numerous posts included the hashtag #fresh in their comments, making a direct link between this characteristic and their products. This is particularly noticeable looking at the posts from HelloFresh and Chipotle. Using and representing freshness to heighten the image of

transparency was already underlined by Rowe (2014). In her review of the release “The Future of Eating: Who's Eating What in 2018?” from NPD Group, Rowe notes that transparency, also in menus, is essential as it can impact the perception of healthy options, and consequently increase sales. Furthermore, she argues that using storytelling about producers and farmers plays an influencing role in promoting the freshness appeal of the products and affecting consumers’ decisions. The data informs that this aspect is also used in the promotion of healthy and conscious food products on Instagram.



Figure 4.41. Post retrieved from @hellofreshnl



Figure 4.42. Post retrieved from @chipotleuk

The connection between these four aspects supports the idea that one manner to connect food products with healthy and conscious values is to express transparency and sustainable commitments. Two other themes are used by the companies: the perception as wellness partners and the enhancement of authenticity. I look at these in turn below.

4.3.3. Become a wellness partner

According to the interpretation of the data, brands tend to connect healthy and conscious lifestyle values with food products on Instagram by presenting themselves as supportive allies. Indeed, their friendly and communicative approach gives the impression that they intend to partner with the audience in their healthy and conscious lifestyle journey. Thus, becoming a wellness partner constitutes the third dominant theme used to answer our sub-question. Overall, these dominant patterns seem to concur with previous studies indicating that healthy food choices beliefs and behaviors constitute one of the major characteristics within the wellness culture and lifestyle

(Melnyk, Amaya, Szalacha, & Hoying, 2016). Also, numerous examples retrieved from the interviews and the textual analysis defends the idea behind that theme and supports the creation of several subcategories, namely, fitness companion, nutritional guide, inspirational chef, and a supporter of changes and ambition.

Nutritional guide

The emergence of certain elements reveals the first category referring to the nutritional guide. The appearance of this pattern was predictable, looking at the ways food brands connect healthy and conscious values with their food products on Instagram. Many evocations and connotations express the nourishing and health benefits of food products. 5th Season, for example, emphasizes the level of nutrients in the products as shown in one of their posts indicating “high in fiber” at the center of an illustration (see figure 4.43), HelloFresh published an infographic informing about basic nutrition rules (see figure 4.44). The development of this subcategory is also supported by examples from Chipotle, which communicates about the balance aspect of the dishes, and particularly emphasizes the nourishing aspects and energy provided. Their posts related to meals always show a balance of carbs, fat, proteins and veggies such as show one picture included in the story “Tofu is Coming”. Also, posts are very specific regarding the dose of the protein, with indications such as “82g of protein” in the visuals (see figure 4.45). Strong Roots also seems to reinforce the nutritive aspects of their products, notably promoting specific health benefits in their captions (see figure 4.46). These examples reinforce the support of the wellness partner as the main theme, but also concord with previous studies on the same topic. Indeed, as Melnyk, Amaya, Szalacha, & Hoying (2016) suggested, healthy food choices and nutritional attention present an overwhelming part of the wellbeing culture and sustainable lifestyle beliefs and behaviors. Furthermore, Previte & Gurrieri (2015) say that the nutritional aspect falls within the health veneration arising from the healthy and conscious lifestyle trend. In conjunction with this category, it seems that brands tend to combine health information with more creative content relating to food. This pattern, aiming to increase the pleasantness aspect of food, will be the focus of the following subtheme.



Figure 4.43. Post retrieved from @5thseasonfruit



Figure 4.44. Post retrieved from @hellofreshnl



Figure 4.45. Post retrieved from @chipotleuk



Figure 4.46. Post retrieved from @strongrootsirl

Inspirational chef

The selected brands not only present educational and nutritional knowledge about the products, but also more inspirational content. This tendency constitutes the main interest of this section, which is consequently named 'inspirational chef'. The majority of the elements supporting the creation of this cluster are retrieved from the analysis of the brands' Instagram pages. Indeed, when looking at the posts, it can be seen that brands aim to be inspirational on Instagram by posting creative recipes, but also incorporating their products, and associating them with specific celebrations. Although recipes are part of HelloFresh's commercial offer, they also publish details of healthy preparations that are not directly related to the meal box. For example, the brand posted several infographics presenting easy-to-make recipes for smoothies (see figure 4.47). 5th Season is also publishing cooking content on Instagram, though in most cases, it shows how to incorporate the products in meals such as breakfast. Also, the brand seems to repost UGC and SMIs for this type of content.

Brigitte, 5th Season's marketing representative, explained in the interview in further details about their process regarding the post of SMI content: "We send them some products and samples,

and we ask for their opinion. And also, if they can post something nice about our products, as feedback and maybe nice recipe". Furthermore, she talked about the importance of publishing inspirational content by claiming that it enables curious customers to have ideas about how to integrate 5th Season snacks into their lives: "We like to have ambassadors that really like the products, and that can integrate them into their lives" (Keijzer, 5th Season). Although a very large number of the posts presented inspirational recipe content, this was not extensively discussed with the other companies. In fact, it seems that the respondents did not identify this tendency as a major or prior pattern to connect with a healthy and conscious lifestyle trend. For instance, the respondent from HelloFresh indicated that it was not the direction they were heading. Also, the Tony's Chocolonely interviewee expressed that the brand happened to post inspirational content, but it was not their main focus: "So inspirational in a way, but not as priority. It's not our focus, because our bar itself has its own story, and it is more than that, there's so much to tell" (Kirsten, Tony's Chocolonely).



Figure 4.47. Post retrieved from @hellofreshnl

Fitness companion

Numerous statements from the respondents but also elements from the Instagram posts can be clustered in the subcategory of fitness companion. Indeed, looking at the data, it seems obvious that brands use fitness as a major focus in order to be represented as the audience's wellness partner. The six brands show a different use and level of integration of fitness- or gym-related content. For example, it seems that the 5th Season promotes its products as a healthy and convenient snack to take during sport or fitness. Examples of material supporting this interpretation are the photos of surf and bike sessions (see figure 4.48). Other examples are the incorporation of gym accessories but also fitness clothes in the images. Chipotle seems to particularly use these later

elements such as pictures with dumbbells, but also combines them with partnerships with gym companies such as Boom cycles (see figure 4.49), and popular brands in the sports world like Adidas (see figure 4.50). Additionally, the use of fitness ambassadors reinforces their relevance concerning fitness and their incorporation of #postworkoutchipotle strengthens their adequacy in term of post-session food (see figure 4.49).

The idea of being perceived as a fitness companion is enhanced by the trust and the relationship developed through the choices of the related partners. In fact, the demonstration of partnerships with social media fitness influencers, but also with popular sports brands or events, strengthens the devotion of brands regarding the health benefits from exercise. Furthermore, it might also improve the trustworthiness of the products from the perspective of the audience as it imparts an additional aspect of wellness. Moreover, the development of this subcategory is consistent with previous research attributing fitness as one of the founding concepts of wellness lifestyle (Melnyk, Amaya, Szalacha, & Hoying, 2016) but also ties with the research of Anker, Boysen, Sandøe, Kamin, and Kappel (2011) that indicates that sports elements positively influence the perception of lifestyle products. Along with the concept of effort, perseverance, and satisfaction resulting in fitness and exercise in general, it appears that brands stimulate attitudes inclined to changes and promoting ambitious behaviors. As many cases and examples illustrate that specific idea, and as it also supports the theme of wellness partner, it will constitute the focal point of the next section.



Figure 4.48. Post retrieved from @5thseasonfruit



Figure 4.50. Post retrieved from @chipotleuk



Figure 4.49. Post retrieved from @chipotleuk

Encourage positive changes and celebrate ambition

From the inductive analysis of the collected data, it can be seen that the encouragement of positive changes and the celebration of ambition is an approach used by brands in order to be associated with healthy and conscious lifestyle values on Instagram. In a similar manner to the previous ideas presented above, it endorses the theme related to wellness, so constitutes an additional category. Indeed, coupled with the physical dimension of wellbeing, the psychological dimension plays a predominant role in the stages of complete wellness fulfillment. Changes and ambitions represent dynamic personal development and improvement, also interconnected with transition phases and achievement. Both aim for the achievement of aspiration and personal improvement. Different examples from the analysis illustrate the patterns associated with this category. Tony's Choclonely, for example, shows its positive support of ambitious behavior with the creation and aid of specific groups of ambassadors labeled Serious Friends. One of the posts focuses on the presentation of Michaela de Prince, Tony's serious friend, who achieves her dream of becoming a professional dancer (see figure 4.51). They also actively stimulate will and changes by including vibrant texts accompanying their pictures such as "take a stand" (see figure 4.50). This cluster of illustrations goes along with the study of Melnyk, Amaya, Szalacha, and Hoying (2016), which mentions goal setting and achievement as part of the healthy lifestyle value and associated behaviors.



Figure 4.51. Post retrieved from @tonyschocolonely_nl

4.3.4. Enhancing Authenticity

A last major theme developed through the selected brands' Instagram corresponds to the enhancement of authenticity. Companies seek to connect their offers with the healthy and conscious lifestyle values by communicating about the human characteristics of the brand, their ordinary customs but also by presenting the ingredients as simple as possible. According to the Financial Times, Emmanuel Faber, Danone's CEO, expressed that the audience looks for new values in their food products, which are more simple, natural, local, small, and with authenticity as a priority (Daneshkhu, 2018). Also, considering that the concept of authenticity closely relates to reality, trustworthiness and genuineness (Ferreti, 2018), but also the audience's new preferences, it is evident that the natural, simplicity and human features are identifiable in the data. Additionally, several consumer trend studies indicate that customers following healthy and conscious food trends are more sensitive to the authenticity aspects (Kasriel-Alexander, 2018; Gordon, 2018). This pattern is not surprising regarding the study of food brands' perception. Indeed, Pattuglia and Mingione (2016) argue that consumer preferences make brands take a more holistic identity approach and consider the four-dimensional aspects of authenticity. Beverland (2006) suggests a conceptual composition of authenticity when referring to a food product, implying six dimensions, namely stylistic consistency, quality, heritage, production method, place, and downplaying commercial motives. However, the six companies selected for this study enhance authenticity on Instagram through the use of different attributes. Indeed, the analysis of the posts and the interviews indicate supplementary dimensions: the demonstration of homemade practices, the

presentation of raw food, seasonal connotations, human touch, and the adoption of humor. These correspond to the subcategories relating to this last theme of enhancing authenticity.

Homemade practices

Both findings from the analyzed posts and interviews indicate a strong trend for the valorization of homemade cooking practices by the brands on Instagram. This more traditional way of cooking, or at least not prepared in factories, is presented as a very valuable habit, applicable not only for the brands but also for the audience in their everyday life. Regarding the sharing of personal experience with homemade practices, food companies tend to demonstrate their personal preparation methods, the love, and efforts behind the end products, but also their competency and pride. From my interpretation of the data, the aluminum used to wrap the burritos appearing in the post published by Chipotle reinforces this idea of homemade as aluminum foil is very commonly used for the conservation of food at home. Besides their own use of home cooking, brands tend to encourage and stimulate customers to also enhance homemade eating. The HelloFresh concept is based on the idea that it is possible for everyone to cook delicious meals at home. Consequently, most of their content relates to homemade dinners. Nevertheless, the brand seems to go further and encourages customers to prepare many other dishes or drinks such as shown on one of their posts promoting 7 healthy tea ideas to make at home (see figure 4.52). Moreover, even though Tony's Chocolonely's brand representative expressed during the interview that recipes were not the priority regarding Instagram content, they still have a post encouraging homemade baking with the use of their chocolate as the star ingredient (see figure 4.53).

Furthermore, the leftovers of breadcrumbs or food around the dishes in the pictures emphasize the homemade aspects as they depict a more imperfect way of cooking and appear the opposite of industrial food preparation. This idea is notably visible in many posts of HelloFresh, for example in the picture presenting a plate of mushroom soup with the appearance of breadcrumbs on the table (see figure 4.54). By claiming the benefits of handmade preparations, brands seek to connect with healthy and conscious values. Indeed, previous studies suggest the perceptions and experiences arising from home food preparations constituted personal motivations but also provided peace of mind, and are part of a lifestyle promoting wellbeing (Essen, & Mårtensson, 2014; Mills, White, Wrieden, Brown, Stead, & Adams, 2017). Simultaneously, the direct link

between homemade practices, their natural aspects and added perceived value by the audience strengthens the theme of enhancing authenticity (Kasriel-Alexander, 2018).



Figure 4.52. Post retrieved from @hellofreshnl



Figure 4.53. Post retrieved from @tonyschocolonely_nl



Figure 4.54. Post retrieved from @hellofreshnl

Raw food

The pure, natural and unrefined aspect of raw food seems to be used in order to support the authentic value of the food products on Instagram. Therefore, it will be the focal point of this second category. Raw food was not specially indicated by the respondents, but appears to be particularly present in the visuals posted by the brands. All of them post pictures of illustrations representing ingredients that have not been transformed or prepared. For instance, Tony's Choclonely post numerous pictures on Instagram showing the different phases and appearance of the cocoa before its transformation. Indeed, the presence of cocoa beans, but also pods, is recurrent in the posts (see figure 4.55). Also, these patterns are discernible on the other brands' Instagram pages, mostly represented by fruits, vegetables or seeds. Chipotle, for example, posts a

very large number of avocados before their preparation into guacamole. It seems that this tendency intends to show to customers the purity of the ingredients. Also, this idea is reinforced by their captions such as “Real ingredients for all mouthkind” (see figure 4.56). The ideas behind these examples concur with several authors’ opinions. Bugge (2015) and Crawford (2006) claim that the tendency of presenting and consuming raw ingredients goes along with a healthy and conscious lifestyle. Indeed, by reducing the process of preparation, and limiting the addition of preservatives, the negative impact of food on the body and environment is reduced. Furthermore, raw food also symbolizes the worship of nature and relates to the recently created term “earthing food” (Princess, Märtha, Louise, & Samnøy, 2009). Moreover, studies claim that the purity of raw food is seen by certain consumers as naturally therapeutic and essential for them to sustain good health (Bugge, 2015). The rustic appearance of raw ingredients reinforces the authentic image of the brand and consequently acknowledges the approbation of the theme of enhancing authenticity.



Figure 4.55. Post retrieved from @tonyschocolonely_n1



Figure 4.56. Post retrieved from @chipotleuk

Relevant timing

Besides the representation of homemade practices and raw food examples from the material reveal additional categories that also play a role in the theme of authenticity. Through the textual analysis of the Instagram posts, many elements incorporated in the captions and in the visuals refer to specific times such as a particular day, period or season. Thus relevant timing constitutes the third category. Many examples from the data confirm these patterns. HelloFresh, for example, uses the seasons to connect with a customer's mood and desires but particularly to show its attention to the natural cycles. These findings can be interpreted in the study of their post showing a salad made with sweet potatoes, quinoa, and pecans. The picture posted on January 5th

depicts a very wintery salad dish, and the caption says “Winter(salad) is coming” (see figure 4.57). The elements referencing to seasons seem to play an important role in food product perception. Indeed, in her book *Media and Food Industries: The New Politics of Food* (2017), Michelle Phillipov explains the different associations falling under these periods relative to the weather. Following her reflection, the use of seasons in food advertising influences the ethical credibility of a brand, its environmental impacts, its attention to the natural cycles, but also its awareness regarding the richness of ripe flavors. Moreover, the author claims that using seasonal features influences a healthy and sustainable brand image. Also, many posts of Leon refer to specific days in their captions such as the #SundaySoupDay (see figure 4.58). This addition of temporal elements intends to connect with the audience's current situation, showing empathy but also demonstrating that the perception and feelings related to certain times are common to everyone, thus, also to companies' employees. The posts from Strong Roots also show that the brand often refers to weekdays, making allusions to usual habits (see figure 4.59).

Next to that, it is clear that the combination of these aspects facilitates the trustworthiness and relation to reality and symbols of authenticity (Ferreti, 2018). Furthermore, this pattern of incorporating relevant timing elements ties with the article of Bellin, Wollan and Zealley (2018), which supports “just in time” approaches and indicates that communicating the right message or connecting to the right experience or context are very valuable to business, particularly when communicating with customers.



Figure 4.58. Post retrieved from @leonrestaurant



Figure 4.57. Post retrieved from @hellofreshnl



Figure 4.59. Post retrieved from @strongrootsirl

Storytelling and human touch

Aside from the patterns relevant to the natural aspects, the material presents several examples associated with the genuine perspective of authenticity. One of them refers to the use of storytelling and human touch. Thus, it represents the focal points of the fourth category. When looking at the posts, but also reviewing the conversations, it became apparent that companies intend to add a very human appeal to their brands. Indeed, the transmission of this moral living being seems to be transmitted via the use of the narrative tone in the captions, a strong interest for the audience, through the evocation of personal feelings and obviously with the creation and recital of stories behind the products. One of the examples that illustrate these patterns can be retrieved from Tony's Choclonely posts. The brand uses storytelling content regularly and in a very specific way. With the cooperation of an African photograph, the brand created an exhibition entitled Bitter chocolate stories, which is about children who worked on cocoa plantations. A few stories of these children were shared via the Instagram page of the company (see figure 4.60). Although this operation seems to aim to raise customer awareness, its communication on the platform also reinforces the story around the products.

The idea of human touch was specifically developed during the conversation with Brigitte from 5th Season. She stated that: "we want to be accessible and transparent. And we want to show you how the product really looks like" (Keijzer, 5th Season). When explaining this, the respondent explained that by using imperfect, or not too much-retouched visuals, but also by interacting with the audience, the brand was trying to be perceived as less artificial, but instead, more honest. Otoa, brand representative of Leon, suggested the importance of being real and transparent when sharing stories about the brand. Indeed, she claimed that: "I mean, we just want to be human. I

think we don't want to, you know, just want to be who we are all really like, I think there's something nice about being true to you know, staying true to who you are" (Ise, Leon). Furthermore, she explained the importance of sharing some behind-the-scenes content, because "I think it's something people don't get to see, unless we share it. And I think it is part of the transparency" (Ise, Leon). This exact same aspect appeared to be acknowledged during the interview with Katie about the brand Strong Roots. She explained that: "it's about treating are treating our followers with respect as well. But they obviously understand and know, what goes on behind the scenes. Yeah, trying to make it as, you know, transparent and real as possible" (Harrington, Strong Roots). This idea is notably visible in many of their posts, showing the team but also some funny behind-the-scenes pictures (see figures 4.61 and 4.62). Furthermore, Kirsten, Tony's Chocolonely representative, also related to human characteristics during the interview. She claimed that one way to show honesty but also to remind customers that people are behind products is to acknowledge the possibility of mistakes when customers complain: "Because we are all human. And everybody makes mistakes, and actually people really liked the fact that we were being transparent about it" (Kirsten, Tony Chocolonely). In addition, to show sincerity, it revokes the idea that errors are human, and that is one of the elements that separates us from the machines.



Figure 4.60. Post retrieved from @tonyschocolonely_nl



Figure 4.61. Post retrieved from @strongrootsirl

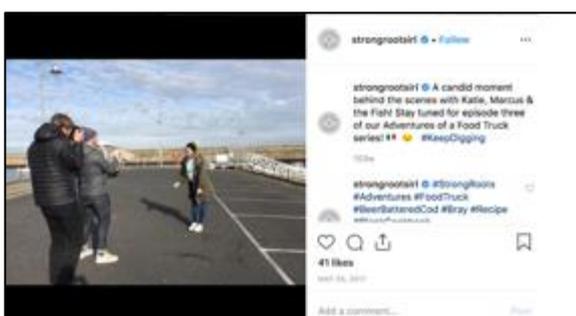


Figure 4.62. Post retrieved from @strongrootsirl

Therefore, it supports the idea of humanity behind the concept of authenticity. Although storytelling and human presence on Instagram content constitute an immersive way to develop an authentic product image, an additional related strong cluster of examples retrieved from the posts and conversation reveal a final category, as explained below.

Humoristic features

Continuing with the same aspect of authenticity, namely genuineness, food companies seem to use Instagram to transmit a funny brand image. Numerous visual elements but also figures of speech heighten this idea, giving the sense to the last category referring to humoristic features. As mentioned above, brands actively implement humorous content on their Instagram. According to the textual analysis, brands adopt humor in their Instagram content through very different aspects, such as the use of the second degree, but also rhetoric, sex appeal, mockery, wordplay, and memes. For example, in one of their posts, Chipotle presents the statistical results of the question “what I want in a boyfriend”. The most successful answer is “knows my Chipotle order” (see figure 62). With this content, the brand is using humor and exaggeration. Alongside with the findings of the textual analysis, most of the respondents acknowledge the choice of using humor. Kirsten from Tony’s Chocolonely, for instance, stated that: “We always try to add something fun, cool. We actually try to add humor as it corresponds to one of our core values. So we always try to add a small joke in the copy as well” (Kirsten, Tony Chocolonely). Other brand representatives shared a similar idea, for instance, Otoa when she argued during the interview: “I think it does need to be fun, quite fun to be engaging” (Ise, Leon).

These findings concur with previous research relating to the use and impact of humor in advertising, as well as its justification of authenticity as main themes. Gunter (2016) states that food advertisements often use humoristic appeals to attract customers’ interest, but also, in a more general perspective, to transmit a very fun and friendly brand image. Previous studies complement that idea, indicating that the positive combination of the human-featured brand attitudes and the funniness of the Instagram posts reinforces customers’ affection for, and trust in, brands (Eisend, 2009; Kusumasondaja & Tjiptono, 2019). Consequently, the reinforcement of credibility generated by the human and funny characteristics related to humor also supports the dominant theme of authenticity.

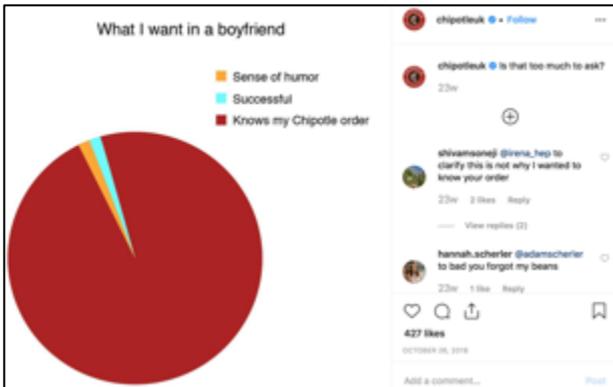


Figure 4.61. Post retrieved from @chipotleuk

5. Conclusion

5.1. Main Findings

Instagram is an increasingly used advertising channel, aiming to not only provide visibility and traffic but also playing a role in customer perception. With its visual characteristics and strong influence in shaping customer beliefs, the social website is very beneficial for businesses in product promotion, but also in the construction of the overall brand image. Previous research reviewed notably showed Instagram's use in advertising both food and healthy and conscious lifestyle products (cite). The present study aimed to show the way food companies use this SM platform in order to be perceived as healthy and conscious brands. Therefore, the purpose was to understand and create a sense of how food brands take advantage of and embrace Instagram's features. In light of the previous insights, this research suggests three main practices: the ability to target and reach the LOHAS audience; the opportunity to incorporate strong emotional and rational appeals translated as brand benefits; and the communication of healthy and conscious lifestyle values through the portrayal of an utopian atmosphere, the demonstration of transparency and sustainable commitments, the connection with wellness and the enhancement of authenticity.

The division of the research questions into three sub-questions was not only necessary to study the topic, but also valuable to reveal dominant themes and recurrent patterns related to the use of Instagram as an advertising channel in order for a brand to be perceived as healthy and conscious. The study of the selection of LOHAS consumers reveals the importance of selecting a specific and interested target audience for healthy and conscious food advertising on Instagram. As has been suggested in the literature review, advertising appeals trigger certain beliefs and attitudes, thus the incorporation of emotional and rational appeals through Instagram content is very influential in shaping customers' food products perceptions. Next to that, the communication of themes and values attached to the notion of health and conscious dimensions and related to wellness approaches strongly participate in the brand image, consequently playing a role in the overall perception of brands and connecting them to the notion of a specific lifestyle. Therefore, the combination of these three subparts was fundamental to answer the main question.

It is clear that the study of the previous chapters was essential to the research. The introduction actively informed about background information regarding the rise of concern for global issues in the eyes of consumers, the consequent emergence of the healthy and conscious lifestyle trend, and the significant popularity of Instagram and its forces in shaping users' attitudes and beliefs. Furthermore, it acknowledges the academic and societal importance of the study. The theoretical chapter provided the possibility and served to create a framework for this empirical research. It specifically enabled a precise review of the concepts and theories regarding LOHAS consumers and their values, Instagram advertising, rational and emotional appeals, and the promotion and perception of healthy and conscious food products. Moreover, the choice of the methodological approach strongly participated in the analysis progress and the findings of valuable outcomes. The combination of qualitative research methods provides the possibility to thoroughly comprehend the complete extent of the topic. Whereas the textual analysis aided to investigate the companies' practices on Instagram, in-depth interviews enabled an understanding of how the brands' representatives perceive the way the platform facilitates the advertising of healthy and conscious lifestyle products. Both findings complement each other, contributing to a more relevant answer. Besides, the operationalization of the selection of healthy and conscious customer group, the use of advertising appeals, and the communication of specific relevant values by food brands on Instagram specifically helped to investigate the concepts during the interviews and textual analysis.

5.2. Theoretical implications

Looking back at the review of the literature, the research findings substantiate the value of certain theoretical discussions but also bring a different perspective to some others. First, it is interesting to note that the findings correlate with the work of Bublitz and Peracchio (2015) claiming the importance of selecting a specific audience for the promotion of health and conscious food products. Indeed, the present paper reinforces that idea but also the connection made by Choi & Feinberg (2018) between the advertising of this specific niche of offers and the target of LOHAS audiences. Then, regarding the implementation of advertising appeals, the paper coincides with the research of Lee & Hong (2016), and Wnent (2016), but also adds additional understanding about their uses on Instagram. Furthermore, the present study brings complementary in-depth information to the quantitative research of Klassen et al. (2018) about the promotion of health and

conscious brands on Instagram. Besides, the research significantly contributes to the academic debate as it complements the previous research of Deighton and Kornfeld (2009), Bird (2011), and Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie (2014) about social media marketing used, and provides additional insights to the work of Abidin & Ots (2015) and Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) arguing the relevance of Instagram use for the promotion of lifestyle content. Moreover, the study helps to fill the gap expressed by Vassallo et al. (2018) claiming that the work done in the literature is not sufficient and lacks investigation mostly regarding the incorporation of values and reaching consumers through Instagram advertising.

In addition to that, the theoretical implications of the interpretation of the findings addressed particular and unexpected observations, leading to unanticipated new insights. Indeed, the research and steps taken suggest that although some theories and concepts are very congruent, as expressed above, additional diverse approaches or practices are used by food companies on Instagram to be perceived as healthy and conscious lifestyle brands, for example, regarding the use of social media influencers. Indeed, whereas Djafarova & Rushworth (2017), and Khamis, Ang & Welling (2017) claim the effectiveness of these intermediates in terms of trustworthiness, the findings showed that their usage can differ but also that their credibility can be doubtful. Furthermore, findings regarding the aesthetic dimension of Instagram differ from the theories discussed in the literature review (Lavoie, 2015; Abidin & Ots, 2015; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Indeed, the research underlines a new tendency on the social platform. Even though the channel is usually seen as a symbol of the depiction of aesthetic visuals and perfect representations, it seems there is currently a notable shift happening toward more realistic perception. Users seem to desire a more realistic depiction of life with not one ideal standard. Regarding the advertising of healthy and conscious lifestyle trend, this change is notably interconnected with the dimension of wellness and specifically implemented through UGC. These last examples indicate that the vision and uses of Instagram as an advertising channel are not static but rapidly evolve, following audiences' shifting values.

5.3. Social Implications

The key strength of this study is its new interdisciplinary approach, notably combining the study of the healthy and conscious lifestyle trend, social media advertising and food promotion. The

present study makes several noteworthy contributions to the current literature, and the empirical insights provide a new understanding of the advertising of this niche market. Indeed, the study has connected and revealed, for the first time, new perspectives regarding Instagram advertising of food products as well as healthy and conscious lifestyle. Besides, the social relevance of this study arises from the fact that it enhances understanding of the study of the healthy and conscious lifestyle trend resulting from global issues. Moreover, it provides additional evidence concerning the business implications of this trend, and confirms the work of Otsuki (2014) explaining the emergence of a more sustainable form of economy, with food as one of the main aspects.

5.4. Limitations

The major limitations of this study lie in the allocation of resources for the research. The scope of the study was limited in terms of means and time, so only examined the data of six companies. However, the combination of interviews and textual analysis allowed a focus on the interactive processes of food brands' uses of Instagram as an advertising channel, making sense of the brand representatives' interviews as well as their content published on Instagram. Therefore, a mixed methods approach provided very valuable and in-depth information. Also, though the researcher was involved in the process, notably in the data selection and in the interpretation of the results, this did not impact the credibility of the study. Indeed, all the choices made were explained, transparent in every step, and based on the previous theoretical framework. Moreover, particular attention to the reflexivity and the role of the researcher was paid to avoid potential subjective connection that could influence the quality of the research.

5.5. Suggestion for future research

As the field relative to this research is relatively recent, further research would help to contribute to filling the gaps in the academic literature. First, additional work would be very valuable to complement the subject of the present study. This paper focused on investigating the ways food brands use Instagram for advertising purposes to influence their healthy and conscious image. It would also be interesting to analyze how followers actually perceived the brands through the channel. This would complete the current research with additional insights and provide the

literature with a better understanding of the effectiveness of the platform in constructing a brand image. Then, the study gave rise to many questions regarding the development of this healthy and conscious lifestyle trend and underlined the need for further investigation. The current literature informs about the growth of the LOHAS market and indicates that specifically related values seem to highly influence their choice of products and services. Furthermore, the development of this lifestyle trend does not only symbolize the increase of future demand for health and conscious products but also denotes a global shift in consumer behavior. Consequently, it would be interesting to understand the extent and opportunities of this market segment for businesses. Another possible area of future research would be an investigation of Instagram's progress and evolution as an advertising channel. Finally, the rise of customers' participative dimension of the social platform tends to disconnect with the aesthetic features for which it is known. Therefore, more understanding regarding the rise of these two contradictory characteristics would be very useful.

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Appendix A: Topic list

This appendix presents the topic list that was used to guide the six semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted through the research process of this study.

1) Brand and products

- * Could you describe your brand, your products, and your market?
- * Do you have specific commitments or objectives a brand?
- * What is the idea or message that you want to transmit with your products?
- * On the website, it said "...", "...". Could you explain it a bit more in detail?

2) General Use of Social Media

- * Since when does the company use social media?
- * Do you remember when you start to accelerate the use of them?
- * What types of social media websites do you use?
- * Do you use them differently? If yes, could you explain the purpose of each?
- * How is it integrate into your marketing strategy?
- * Do you follow a structured social content planning schedule?
- * How often do you post on social media?
- * Do you set KPIs in terms of likes, follows, engagement?
- * Could you explain your activity relating to the engagement of customers on social media?

3) Instagram uses

- * Could you describe your activity on Instagram?
- * Whom are you following? Do you have specific criteria to follow other accounts?
- * Which kind of content do you use? Photos, videos, stories.
- * Could you explain to me again how different your activity objectives are with Instagram?
- * Do you think the platform provides you with more opportunities than the other social media? For example, in terms of consumer reach?

- * Do you create a partnership with other businesses or influencers?
- * Do you use other tools on the platform? Such as user-generated content?

4) Consumers segments

- * How would you define your customers? Do you segment your audience into different customer profiles?
- * Could you tell me more about each one of them?
- * Do you use the same channel to reach them?
- * Do you use the same content/strategy to connect with them?
- * Do you observe contradictions in their behavior?
- * Numerous research distinct the LOHAS corresponding to Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability.

Did you already hear about it?

- if not:

“individuals concerned about the current global issues and their consequences. They have strong preoccupations led to the beliefs of profound values, specific lifestyles, and new attitudes regarding consumption of good and services. They focus on multiple aspects such as the environment, personal development, health, fitness, and sustainability. Their way of life pursuits a perfect balance and harmony between the planet, the people and society”

- If yes: How do you connect it with your target audience?

- * Research has shown these environmental and health impacts are two factors that customers easily relate together. For example, a person attentive to the health value of his food products might be also concern by the environmental footprint of the production. Is that something that you take into account in your marketing strategy?

5) Healthy and conscious food products promotion

Micro food subcultures & wellness

- * Research claims there are several food discourses on Instagram, developed with the apparition of microcultures. For example, the vegan, vegetarian, keto diets but also organic and Fairtrade production. How do you relate your products to these?
- * Do your activity on Instagram play a role in these microcultures?
- * How do you think the expansion of these healthy and conscious concerns relate to the lifestyle trend?
- * Do you relate to well-being?
- * Is this something that seems important to communicate on?
- * How do you relate to it on your Instagram activity?

Tone and elements

- * Specific content and tone do you use?
- * What is the message you are trying to translate via these?
- * How do you translate the idea of healthiness and consciousness of your products on Instagram?
- * Which elements, colors, and symbols seem to you effective?

Social media influencers, # and UGC

- * Do you use only personal publication or also influencers, user-generated content?
- * Can you explain to me a bit more about the process of each
- * How do you think your activities with social media influencers influence the promotion and perception of your products?
- * Do the brand work in partnership with other companies sharing similar values, if yes, what are the objectives and benefits?
- * How does it affect your image?
- * Do you often use #? What is the main purpose? Which one do you use the most?
- * How do you think it affects your promotion?
- * How important do you consider these partnerships on Instagram in your marketing strategy?

6) Advertising appeals

* What advertising appeal do you use on Instagram? Do you differentiate emotional and rational appeals?

* Some researchers claim that the emotional level, the pleasure, and the taste were essential to promote food products. Do you confirm it? Is it something that you emphasize in your posts? They also insist on the fact that using humor and unexpected elements are more effective than factual, descriptive information. What do you think about it?

7) Connection of the brand with healthy and conscious lifestyle values

* How does Instagram play a role in your brand image?

* What makes Instagram an efficient channel to promote healthy and conscious products?

* Which topics or themes relating to the healthy and conscious trend do you use?

Discussion of few posts retrieved from the sample of the textual analysis (depending on the Instagram content of each brands)

* I noticed these aspects on your post, do you agree?

* It seems that regarding this dimension, these posts are contradictory, what do you think?

* Could you tell me what was the intension with the use of this specific post?

Probes used during the interview:

* Asking the interviewee to elaborate on a given answer

* Member check to verify comprehension and stimulate details

* Peer debriefing to relate to the theory, compare brands' strategies and gather information regarding about the marketing representatives' beliefs.

* Staying silent to indicate that more info is expected to be given

* Asking more detailed and sub-questions in response to given answers

* Highlight inconsistencies or unclarities and ask for the interviewee's thoughts on that

Appendix B: Code tree

The code tree below presents the main themes, the selective codes, axial codes and a collection of open codes retrieved from the thematic analysis performed through the current paper.

