

# **Understanding generation MZ consumers' purchase motivation for food character products and its application in social marketing**

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## **Abstract**

Character application is a universal strategy in marketing activities, in particular, for child-targeted food products. However, not only children but also adult consumers have been enthusiastic about purchasing Pokémon bread product recently in Korea, and behind this phenomenon, there was a problem with bread being thrown away. Although the seriousness of food waste has been constantly discussed in Korea, Pokémon bread has added to the food waste problems with its explosive popularity. According to this awareness of the problem, this study was designed to understand Korean Generation MZ consumer's purchasing motivation of Pokémon bread and to find alternative approaches to utilizing characters to solve social problems, in particular food waste. To achieve this research purpose, the author conducts qualitative research through in-depth interviews with 10 consumers and 5 marketing experts in Korea's food industry and analyzes the collected data according to a two-step coding process, inspired by Grounded theory. Through this process, this research examines 1) purchase motivation and contextual factors of Pokémon bread phenomenon, 2) consequences and attitudes towards the phenomenon, and 3) possibilities and limitations in character utilization for public marketing. Finally, a practical approach of utilizing characters in social marketing to reduce food waste is proposed.