

# BETTER SOMETIMES YOU'D ASK THE TWEENS

A qualitative research on **persuasive communication** in a flyer for youth organizations.  
The influence of different message characteristics: **evidence** and **perspective**.



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## Abstract

**Background** The amount of activities with which children can fill their leisure time has steadily increased over the years. Youth associations have also noticed this, because their number of memberships is decreasing. To attract new members, it is possible to use persuasive communication. The question is how to design this communication in such a way that it suits the preferences of the children? The type of evidence and the type of perspective that are used in the persuasive message can influence the preferences of children. This study is focused on tweens: children in the interim phase from child to teenager.

**Purpose** The purpose of this research is to create more insight in the preferences of type of evidence and the type of perspective of tweens regarding flyers for youth associations. In order to make a text more persuasive, the probability and desirability have to be made evident. This can be done by providing evidence. Evidence can be divided into four types (statistical, anecdotal, causal and expert), of which in this study statistical and anecdotal evidence are central. Statistical evidence is based on a summary of numbers to illustrate a story of specific cases, whereas anecdotal evidence is based on giving an example or a particular case. Based on previous literature concerning television commercials directed at children, it is expected that tweens can create a favorable attitude towards anecdotal evidence. The second variable that is central in this study is the perspective with which a text is written. In previous literature it is examined which aspects tweens consider as important. A distinction is made between the social perspective (a text focusing on social interaction and social belonging) and the individual perspective (a text focusing on personal fulfillment of a tween). In this qualitative research tweens themselves are the experts by determining their preferences in flyers.

**Method** This study is built on qualitative research; 6 focus groups have been organized. A total of 29 tweens (8-12 years) participated in this study. A distinction was made between young and old tweens and boys and girls. The focus groups were aimed to get insight in the general knowledge about flyers and, additionally, to identify the preferences of tweens in flyers, regarding evidence and perspective. In addition, they were asked to fulfill an interactive task: design a text on a flyer to persuade as many members as possible to become a member. In this way it could be seen what tweens themselves consider as important in designing texts on flyers.

**Results** Texts written with statistical evidence are preferred more by the tweens than texts written with anecdotal evidence. Differences between boys and girls and between young and old tweens regarding the preference of evidence cannot be found. On the other hand, the individual perspective is only preferred by young tweens and boys, whereas the social perspective is neither preferred by boys nor girls and young nor old tweens. It can be concluded that the individual perspective is preferred by tweens.

**Conclusion** Flyers with statistical individual written texts are preferred by the tweens. Based on previous literature concerning television commercials for children, it was expected that anecdotal evidence could create a more favorable attitude. This was, however, not the case. It is interesting to further examine the combination of the two variables, evidence and perspective, because not only youth organizations can benefit from more information and because research on this topic is minimal. Additionally, tweens (just as children and teenagers) have to be given the chance to express their opinion more often and have to be given the chance to be experts. They can be very valuable for further research.

## Samenvatting

**Achtergrond** Het aantal activiteiten waarmee kinderen hun vrije tijd kunnen invullen is gegroeid door de jaren heen. Jeugdorganisaties merken dat ook, want hun ledenaantal daalt. Om nieuwe leden aan te trekken, is het verstanding gebruik te maken van persuasieve communicatie. De vraag is echter: op welke manier moet deze communicatie worden ingevuld zodat het past bij de voorkeuren van kinderen? Verschillende kenmerken kunnen invloed hebben op de persuasieve communicatie, zoals het type evidentie en het type perspectief dat wordt gebruikt. Dit onderzoek is gericht op tweens: dit zijn kinderen in de tussenfase van kind naar tiener.

**Doel** Het doel van dit onderzoek is om meer inzicht te verkrijgen in de voorkeuren van tweens met betrekking op het type evidentie en het type perspectief in flyers voor jeugdverenigingen. Om een tekst meer persuasief te maken, moeten de waarschijnlijkheid en wenselijkheid duidelijk worden gemaakt. Dit kan aan de hand van evidentie. Evidentie bestaat uit vier types (statistisch, anekdotisch, causale en expert), waarbij in dit onderzoek statistische en anekdotische evidentie centraal staan. Statistische evidentie wordt gevormd door een getalsmatige samenvatting van een aantal specifieke gevallen en anekdotische evidentie bestaat uit het aanvoeren van één specifiek geval of voorbeeld. Op basis van voorgaande literatuur naar televisiecommercials voor kinderen, wordt er verwacht dat tweens een positieve houding kunnen creëren ten opzichte van anekdotische evidentie. De tweede variabele die centraal staat is het perspectief waarmee de tekst geschreven wordt. In voorgaande literatuur is er gekeken welke aspecten tweens als belangrijk beschouwen. Op basis daarvan is er onderscheid gemaakt tussen het sociale perspectief (een tekst die zich focust op sociale interactie en het 'erbij willen horen') en het individuele perspectief (een tekst die zich focust op persoonlijke ontwikkeling van een twee). In dit kwalitatieve onderzoek worden tweens zelf als experts ingezet om te bepalen wat hun voorkeuren zijn in flyers voor jeugdverenigingen.

**Methode** In deze studie is er gebruik gemaakt van kwalitatief onderzoek en zijn er 6 focusgroepen uitgevoerd. In totaal hebben 29 tweens in de leeftijd van 8 tot en met 12 jaar meegewerkt aan dit onderzoek. Er is een verdeling gemaakt tussen jonge en oude tweens en tussen jongens en meisjes. De focusgroepen hadden tot doel een beeld te vormen van de algemene kennis van flyers en daarnaast de voorkeuren, met betrekking tot evidentie en perspectief, die tweens hebben in flyers te achterhalen. Daarnaast kregen ze een interactieve opdracht om zelf een tekst op een flyer te ontwerpen om zoveel mogelijk nieuwe leden over te halen om lid te worden. Op deze manier wordt het duidelijk wat de tweens zelf belangrijk achten in persuasieve communicatie.

**Resultaten** Teksten geschreven met statistische evidentie worden geprefereerd door de tweens. Op gebied van evidentie is er geen verschil te vinden tussen jongens en meisjes of tussen oude en jonge tweens. Daarentegen had het individuele perspectief de voorkeur van jonge tweens en van jongens. Het sociale perspectief had niet overwegend de voorkeur van oude tweens en van meisjes. Er kan daarom worden geconcludeerd dat het individuele perspectief de voorkeur heeft van tweens.

**Conclusie** Flyers geschreven met statistische evidentie worden geprefereerd door tweens. Op basis van voorgaande literatuur naar televisiecommercials voor kinderen werd verwacht dat anekdotische evidentie een positieve houding kon creëren. Dit was echter niet het geval. Het is interessant om in vervolgonderzoek nog verder in te gaan op de combinatie van de twee variabelen, evidentie en perspectief, omdat niet alleen jeugdorganisaties baat kunnen hebben bij deze nieuwe informatie, maar ook omdat onderzoek op dit gebied nog minimaal is. Daarnaast moeten tweens (net als kinderen en tieners) vaker de kans krijgen hun mening te laten blijken en daarmee de kans krijgen om een expert te zijn. Ze kunnen namelijk erg waardevol in vervolgonderzoek.

## Voorwoord

Na een afstudeerperiode van acht maanden ligt hier mijn scriptie ter afronding van mijn masteropleiding 'Communication Studies' aan de Universiteit Twente. Dag en nacht was ik fysiek en geestelijk bezig met mijn scriptie en keek ik af en toe weemoedig naar het moment dat ik eindelijk mijn voorwoord kon gaan schrijven. Nu is het moment dan eindelijk daar.

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## § 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2002 Stichting Ideële Reclame (SIRE) started a campaign to ask attention for the full leisure agendas of children nowadays. The amount of activities with which children can fill their leisure time has steadily increased over the years. It is therefore hard for several institutions, like, sport clubs and-, youth associations such as scouting and music schools, to attract children and to keep them once they have been attracted. Changes in these kinds of institutions, which are mostly built on the commitment of volunteers, seem to be necessary in order to meet the changing needs and demands of the children (and their parents). It is hard to insert changes in associations that have already existed for a long time, especially because the numbers of volunteers is also decreasing (Dekker, de Hart & Faulk; 2007). This decline is due to the major social changes through budget cuts, the aging and discoloration of the society and also the individualization: voluntary work has developed from an organized moral duty to individual unpaid services (Dekker & de Hart, 2010).

Zeijl, Crone, Wiefferink, Keuzenkamp and Reijneveld (2005) found out after the campaign of SIRE, which resulted in a lot of debate, that there were hardly no studies on the issue. Zeijl et. al (2005) therefore provided an overview of the living conditions, well-being, pastime and the use of facilities of young children (0-12 years), in order to describe the situation concerning children. The study showed that 54% of the children aged 8-12 are members of one or more leisure associations. In this percentage they distinguish between members of a sport association (77%), sing-, music-, theater association (23%), nature and environment association (10%) and youth or hobby association (10%).

It seems that this percentage of members in different associations has been decreasing in the last 5 years, probably due to the amount of activities the children can choose from. Research by Zeijl (2001), with a 1000 children between the ages of 10 and- 15, just before the campaign of SIRE, showed that almost half of the children have one or two appointments on weekdays: something that does not directly indicates a too full leisure agenda. Although there are no published numbers after 2005 yet (regarding all children in the Netherlands), the decrease is noticeable and a 'hot topic' on the agenda of several institutions (NOCNSF, 2010; KNHS, 2007; Jeugdmonitor Zeeland, 2012). Statistics



of Jeugdmonitor Zeeland (2012), for example, show a steady downward trend already starting in 2010 concerning the participation in associations of 9- and 10-year olds.

Van den Berg and de Hart (2008) state that through a full agenda, an extensive entertainment industry and the introduction of television and computer, children are less occupied with social contacts and collective activities on a regular and organized basis. The voluntary sector notices this too and is trying to attract new children in order to ensure that the organizations can continue to exist. The youth associations (which attract only 10 % of the children that are members of a leisure association) are struggling to attract and to retain members, because there is a growing range of leisure facilities.

The main problem in youth associations is, therefore, the decrease in the number of members. It is a matter of retaining and (potential) recruitment of new members. One way to try to achieve a raise in members is to use persuasive communication. The question is: what is the best way to design this kind of communication? Several matters can affect the effectiveness of persuasive communication, for example the perspective of the message and the type of evidence. This study attempts to find answers regarding what kind of persuasive communication children prefer. An example of persuasive communication is a flyer. A flyer contains a short persuasive, understandable message that potential members can easily process and understand. When trying to persuade new members in youth associations, the children themselves are the ones with the most expertise. In this study the expertise of children will be the key to find out their preferences regarding persuasive communication in youth associations.

In this study the primary target group is tweens. Tweens are children in the interim phase from child to teenager. Tweens are not children anymore, but also not yet teenagers: the name is therefore derived from '*In between*'. Most marketers define tweens as children between the ages 8 and 12 (Siegel, Coffey & Livingston, 2001; Andersen, Tufte, Rasmussen, & Chan, 2007).

## § 1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

The main goal of this research is to determine the preferences of tweens regarding flyers. This leads to the following main research question:

*What are the preferences of tweens regarding flyers for youth organizations?*

In this study qualitative research will be used to find an answer to the main question.

## § 1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

The decrease in members is also noticeable at CJV ('Christelijke Jongeren Verbond'). CJV is a local department of the worldwide organization YMCA (Young Men's Christian Associations). *"YMCA offers children, teenagers and adolescents a place where they feel at home and have the possibility to develop themselves. They can laugh together, discover their talents and are able to learn to work together during activities that fit with their age and interests. In this way YMCA can contribute to the society in which there is space and attention for everyone"* (YMCA Jeugdwerk, 2012).

The decrease in members also has an influence on the financial budget and therefore makes it harder to realize the activities that CJV aspires (because of the low budget that is left). It is important for CJV that the number of memberships starts increasing again. For that reason they could benefit from the use of a flyer to attract potential members. CJV will therefore be used as context in this study into preferences of tweens regarding flyers.

## § 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One way to attract new members is to use persuasive communication. Persuasive texts are designed to induce the receiver to act in a certain way, for example: 'use public transport more often' (Hornikx, 2005). The goal of persuasive communication is thus to persuade individuals with a message and thereby to affect their attitude and behavior (de Pelsmacker, Geuens & van den Bergh, 2008).

### § 2.1 EVIDENCE: ANECDOTAL VS. STATISTICAL

To support the message, the designer can make use of arguments. According to Hoeken and Hustinx (2002) these arguments should clearly demonstrate that the consequences of the message (for example: using medicine X) are more plausible, desirable and likely than the consequences of the alternative (not using medicine X). To reinforce the arguments or to make the outcome more desirable and plausible, different forms of evidence can be used. Evidence can be defined 'as data (facts and opinions) presented as proof for an assertion' (Reynolds & Reynolds, 2002). This implies that evidence consists of data (facts and opinions) that make the occurrence of a particular consequence plausible. Hoeken, Hornikx and Hunstinx (2009) state that to persuade, people need to hear evidence in the message.

According to Hoeken and Hustinx (2002) there are 4 different types of evidence. The 4 types of evidence are illustrated with examples of Hornikx (2003), who provides examples about how the data can be presented per evidence type (illustrating a case in which the reader must be persuaded to drink less cognac because one will suffer from nausea).

- Anecdotal evidence is giving an example or a particular case within a message. For example:  
*"During the birthday of his daughter Johan (47) drunk about 6 glasses of cognac. The morning after he experienced nausea" (Hornikx, 2003, p. 208)*
- Statistical evidence is a summary of numbers to illustrate a story or specific case. For example: *"Fifteen percent of the people who drink too much cognac, suffer from nausea afterwards" (Hornikx, 2003, p. 208)*

- Authority evidence is formed by an opinion of an expert in a given area. For example:  
*"According to alcohol expert Dr. F. Klasen, drinking of too much cognac leads to nausea" (Hornikx, 2003, p. 208)*
- Causal evidence is explaining the occurrence of an effect based on a cause-effect relationship. For example: *"Alcohol ends up in the blood and affects the stomach and the vestibular system in the brains" (Hornikx 2003, p. 208)*

A more specific definition of anecdotal evidence (also called narrative evidence, a case or an exemplar) is that it presents the experience of a particular person or case that provides details allowing the reader to make a mental visualization of the person and the situation (Green, Campo & Barnerjee, 2010). A typical exemplar provides a small story with a main character that shows that an (un) desirable effect will occur.

A message based on statistical evidence contains numeric information about, for example, someone's relative risk of a condition or a positive effect that will occur in a specific case (Green et al., 2010). A message like this is generally based on numbers and (scientific) facts. A typical statistical evidence based message is '65 % of people who show a particular behavior, avoid getting a particular disease' or 'the chance to successfully participate in an education is 6 times higher when someone has a lot of discipline'.

Many studies show that evidence is important in the persuasion process (O'Keefe, 2003; Reinard, 1988). The presence of strong evidence increases the persuasiveness in a message (Stiff & Mongeau, 2003). As a result much research has been conducted to examine which type of evidence is the most persuasive. Although other types of evidence have also been investigated (e.g. expert evidence and causal evidence), most research attention has been paid to statistical and anecdotal evidence (Hornikx, 2007; Hoeken, 2001). The question which evidence type (anecdotal or statistical) is most effective has been a topic in different fields of research such as advertising, argumentation, public policy, health communication, cognitive psychology, and mass communication for over 60 years (Hornikx, 2007). This is probably due to the fact that recent studies on persuasiveness of these

evidence types have shown contrasts in the findings of less recent reviews on evidence (Hornikx, 2007).

Although the differences between the persuasiveness of anecdotal and statistical evidence have frequently been examined, the outcomes have shown different results. Table 1 presents an overview of the studies on statistical vs. anecdotal evidence (page 14).

Table 1 – Overview studies statistical vs. anecdotal evidence

	Author(s)	Year	Design	Result	Variable
1.	Kahneman & Tversky	1973	Base-rate vs. similarity	AN > ST	Judgements
2.	Bar Hilel	1975	Base-rate vs. story	AN > ST	Judgements
3.	Nisbett & Borgida	1975	Base rate vs. story	AN > ST	Behavior
4.	Borgida & Nisbett	1977	Base-rate vs. concrete	AN > ST	Decision making
5.	Carroll	1977	Base rate vs. clinical strategy	AN > ST	Judgements
6.	Wells & Harvey	1977	Statistical vs. story	ST > AN	Persuasiveness
7.	Jemmott & Taylor	1979	Statistical vs. story	AN > ST	Beliefs
8.	Martin & Powers	1979	Statistical vs. case	AN > ST	Persuasiveness
9.	Ginosar & Trope	1980	Base rate vs. individuating information	AN > ST	Judgements
10.	Hamill, Wilson & Nisbett	1980	Statistical vs. report	AN > ST	Attitude
11.	Martin & Powers	1980	Base-rate information vs. case	AN > ST	Beliefs
12.	Dickson	1982	Abstract statistical information vs. case-history information	ST > AN	Judgments
13.	Nadler	1983	Statistical vs. report	ST = AN	Persuasiveness
14.	Ryland	1983	Statistical vs. report	ST = AN	Decision making
15.	Sherer & Rogers	1984	Base-rate vs. case-history	ST = AN	Intention
16.	Koballa	1986	Data-summary vs. anecdotal	AN > ST	Persuasiveness
17.	Iyengar & Kinder	1987	Statistical vs. report	ST = AN	Attitude
18.	Reyna, Woodruff & Brainerd	1987	Statistics vs. case history	ST = AN	Attitude
19.	Reinard	1988	Statistical vs. anecdotal	AN > ST	Persuasiveness
20.	Baesler	1991	Statistical vs. story	ST > AN	Persuasiveness
21.	Zillman, Perkins & Sundar	1992	Base-rate vs. exemplar	AN > ST	Attributions
22.	Kazouleas	1993	Statistical vs. narrative	ST = AN	Attitude
23.	Allen & Preiss	1994	Statistical vs. narrative	ST > AN	Persuasiveness
24.	Baesler & Burgoon	1994	Statistical vs. story	ST > AN	Persuasiveness
25.	Slater & Rouner	1996	Statistical vs. anecdotal	ST > AN	Persuasiveness
26.	Hoeken & van Wijk	1997	Statistical vs. anecdotal	ST = AN	Persuasiveness
27.	Allen et. al	2000	Statistical vs. anecdotal	ST > AN	Persuasiveness
28.	Cox & Cox	2001	Statistical vs. anecdotal	ST = AN	Persuasiveness
29.	Hoeken	2001a	Statistical, anecdotal and causal evidence	ST > AN	Persuasiveness
30.	Hoeken	2001b	Statistical vs. anecdotal	ST = AN	Persuasiveness
31.	Hoeken & Hustinx	2002	Statistical, anecdotal, causal and authority evidence	ST > AN	Persuasiveness
32.	Greene & Brinn	2003	Statistical vs. narrative evidence	ST > AN	Intention
33.	Hoeken & Hustinx	2003	Statistical vs. anecdotal	ST > AN	Persuasiveness
34.	Hornikx	2005	Statistical, anecdotal, causal evidence	ST > AN	Persuasiveness
35.	Hoeken & Hustinx	2009	Statistical, anecdotal, causal and authority evidence	ST > AN	Persuasiveness

Table 1 shows that an equal amount of the studies stated that statistical evidence (N=13) is more convincing than anecdotal evidence (N=13) and the other way around. In 9 studies a difference could not be found between the two types of evidence. This overview shows indeed that recent studies in persuasiveness show contrasts in findings of less recent views on evidence, just as has been said by Hornikx (2007). Until 1992 the studies concluded that anecdotal evidence is more persuasive than statistical evidence, but since 1994 the studies conclude that statistical evidence is more persuasive. It must be kept in mind that several factors may influence persuasiveness and are therefore possible explanations of why the studies have shown contrasts. Hornikx (2005) concluded in his study that it is useful to gain more insight into relative persuasiveness of evidence types, by determining the factors that influence persuasiveness. A few of those important factors are:

1. The quality of evidence itself (Reynolds & Reynolds, 2002):

Evidence should meet normative criteria to be persuasive. Normative criteria are criteria that are formulated as evaluation questions that can be asked to assess the quality of the arguments. Evidence is strong, if it meets normative criteria (Hornikx, 2005). To determine the quality of evidence, manipulations must be taken into account to make a fair comparison of the types of evidence. For example: In case of statistical evidence the normative criterion is that the message contains a large sample size for the argument by generalization. Statistical evidence should therefore consist of numerical information that is based on large sample size before it can be seen as normatively strong. In addition, the size of the large sample sizes in statistical evidence also has an influence on how peoples judgments were affected. Several studies showed that judgments differ according to variations in sample sizes (Darke, Chaiken, Bohner, Einwiller, Erb & Hazlewood, 1998; Doosje, Spears & Komen, 1995). In their studies they found out that *"people were more willing to assume that the population resembles the sample when N is larger"*. Hornikx & Hoeken (2007) also found that statistical evidence with large sample sizes (e.g. 300 persons) was more persuasive than statistical evidence with smaller sample sizes (e.g. 50 persons). In order to meet de normative criteria for statistical evidence, the sample size thus has to be large.

An example of normative criterion in the case of anecdotal evidence is that there have to be

shown many similarities and only a few differences between the two cases (e.g. the main character and person who has to be persuaded), concluded Garssen (1997) and Hornikx (2007). Another explanation for the great differences between studies concerning which type of evidence is more persuasive, is that the level of the representativeness namely can differ (which concerns the homogeneity of the characteristics or cases). Krantz, Jepson, Kunda & Nisbett (1983) demonstrated in their study that people were able to generalize the used evidence more when the population was homogenous, with respect to relevant characteristics, than when it was heterogeneous. So, the level of representativeness concerns in fact the amount of similarities people can perceive. This could also have an influence on how people react on the types of evidence and, therefore, can be an explanation for the great differences in persuasiveness. Only by keeping the normative criteria in mind and by determining that both texts meet the criteria, a fair comparison can be made.

## 2. Vividness and comprehensiveness of the text (Baesler & Burgoon; 1994 and Hoeken & van Wijk; 1997)

Vividness can be defined as follows: “*information that's emotionally interesting, concrete and imagery provoking, proximate in a sensor, temporal, or spatial way*”, according to Nisbett and Ross, (1980). A story, like in anecdotal evidence, is often more concrete, more imagery provoking and colorful in contrast with abstract, dry and pallid statistics. Vividness is therefore an often given explanation for why anecdotal evidence is more persuasive than statistical evidence (Baesler & Burgoon, 1994). Baesler and Burgoon (1994) indicate that many studies in which anecdotal evidence perceived to be more persuasive than statistical evidence, actually should be interpret as: vivid evidence is more persuasive than boring evidence. However, this is only based on one study. When designing statistical and anecdotal messages these two factors must be taken into account (especially in the case of anecdotal evidence, which almost every time turned out to be more vivid and more understandable, according to Baesler and Burgoon, 1994).



### 3. Later research on explanatory mechanisms

Baesler and Burgoon (1994) stated that only Kahneman and Tversky (1973) provided a theoretical explanation for their results, because they stated that heuristics (mental shortcuts) are the explanatory mechanisms. It would be a major contribution to existing knowledge, when researchers would take several things into account like; mediating variables, qualification of heuristics and, for example, additional explanations of belief effects based on evidence type, concluded Baesler and Burgoon (1994).

Before 1994 researchers did not look to explanatory mechanisms, but after 1994 many researchers did in their (replicating) studies and referred to Baesler and Burgoon for multiple times (for example Hoeken & van Wijk, 1997; Hoeken, 2001; Hornikx, 2005) by taking quality of evidence and vividness into account. In table 1 it can be seen that the switch from the more persuasive anecdotal evidence to the more persuasive statistical evidence was in 1994. It seems that by controlling these factors from then on the statistical evidence was more persuasive. It is possible that before 1994, if the researchers had had the knowledge about the factors that could influence the persuasiveness, statistical evidence would have been more persuasive. The fact that researchers have not taken these factors into account until 1994 is something that must be kept in mind and could also explain the contrasts in results.

### 4. Different contexts

Finally, different contexts in which the evidence types have been researched, can explain why anecdotal evidence sometimes turned out to be more persuasive than statistical evidence and vice-versa (Hornikx, 2007). Above, different explanations have been presented that could explain the great contrasts that have been found by determining which type of evidence is more persuasive.

The differences between statistical and anecdotal evidence have been examined most, but the context in this study (the use of evidence in combination with tweens) is relatively new. By joining the existing

literature with this new context, it can be examined what the preferences are of tweens (another target group than normal) by using different types of evidence in a flyer.

## § 2.2 EVIDENCE AND TWEENS

Anecdotal evidence is based on one specific case, often translated into a personal story, whereas statistical evidence is based on a large sample size (numerical summary or a number of cases). Although there has not been any research into the effects of types of evidence on tweens in written communication, there has been much research into the effects of television commercials on children.

### § 2.2.1 CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT & PROMOTIONAL CHARACTERS

Advertisers use several persuasive techniques in television commercials to appeal to children and young people. One technique that affects the popularity of the advert with children is the use of celebrity endorsement (*'a famous person who uses public recognition to recommend or co-present a product in an advert'*) and promotional characters (Nash, Pine & Messer, 2009). The fact that only one main character can have an effect is also stated by Boyland, Harrold, Kirkham & Halford (2011) who conducted research into the field of television advertising directed at children. When a celebrity appears in an advertisement it enhances a products' worth and can increase sale for two reasons: 1) they heighten attention to adverts by virtue of the visual and aural cues associated with celebrity endorsements, and 2) the credibility that celebrities have in their area, has a positive impact on children's attitude towards the brand (Ganz, Schwartz, Angelini & Rideout, 2007).

In many other studies it was also found that the presence of promotional characters on packaging and in television commercials can be effective for creating favorable attitudes towards products, particularly when the characters are well established and recognizable (Boyland, Harrold, Kirkham & Halford, 2011; Garretson & Burton, 2005; Garretson & Niedrich, 2004). If the main character in a story is recognizable and is well established, children can develop a favorable attitude towards a brand. This study does not concern a brand, but the effect (creating a favorable attitude when the main character is recognizable and is well established) can possibly occur in case of a persuasive message written with a main character that meets this conditions (anecdotal evidence).

Celebrities in advertisements are often well-liked because this (possibly) leads to identification and consumer persuasion in an attempt to establish some kind of relationship with the celebrity (Belch and Belch, 2007). Because this appeals to tweens so much, the use of celebrity endorsement and promotional characters is widespread amongst food advertising on popular commercial channels (Bouland, Harrold, Kirkham & Halford, 2012). Although a television commercial and a flyer are not similar, the intention is the same: to persuade children to act in a certain way (for a television commercial this means to persuade to buy brand X, for a flyer of CJV this means to persuade children to become a member of CJV).

Celebrity endorsement as a persuasive technique should not be confused with authority evidence. The latter is based on evidence that is formed on an opinion of an expert in his/her area (for example: the alcohol expert who provides disadvantages of using alcohol), while celebrity endorsement is based on a influential consumer who recommend/oversell a product or service (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). In case of celebrity endorsement a famous person recommends a specific product based on his or her experience with the product. A celebrity is, in this case, not per se an expert in some kind of area or someone with a lot of knowledge, but just a powerful consumer with a specific experience.

### § 2.2.2 IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS

Studies have shown that children and young adults often “*are drawn to, like, and/or identify with media characters that they perceive as demographically similar to themselves*” (Hofner & Buchanan, 2005; Smith, Pieper, Granados & Choueite, 2010). Also, according to the SAH (Similarity Attraction Hypothesis), people are more attracted to others who match their personality and other human characteristics than those who mismatch (Byrne & Nelson, 1965). This attraction leads to increased interaction and attention (Hartz, 1996). If, in this case, a tween can identify with the main character of the anecdotal evidence, anecdotal evidence can increase their attention.

In case of written communication, Land (2009) found out that students also appreciate a text containing identifying characteristics more than a text without identifying characteristics. Thereby, Gray and Harrington (2011) concluded that the presentation of characters in a story influences perceptions

of facts, particularly when the characters with whom individuals may readily identify. This means that, if the reader can relate to the person in the story, the use of anecdotal evidence is effective (Green et al., 2010).

If the main character in the story is well established and is recognizable, demographically similar (e.g. someone of the same age, education), and of the same sex (SAH), in such a way that the tweens are able to identify with the main character, anecdotal evidence can increase the attention and even create a favorable attitude towards the text.

It lacks studies on statistical evidence in combination with children, tweens and/or teenagers. There is also no information available if the law of large numbers has an effect on children/tweens in (written) communication. From this point of view it is expected that tweens like anecdotal evidence, because it is known that anecdotal evidence may have the possibility to create a favorable attitude towards the text. It is unknown if statistical evidence can create the same effect. Qualitative research will reveal which type of evidence tweens prefer.

## § 2.3 PERSPECTIVE OF THE MESSAGE

It is clear that the use of evidence is important in a persuasive message, but it is also important to know the perspective from which the arguments should be described. That the perspective of a message is important is concluded by Auty & Lewis (2004) who stated that, by 'wrapping' a product into entertaining content, it can create a favorable attitude towards the product without the user being aware. The content of a persuasive message can be written with different perspectives ('wrappings'), which thus can have an influence on the attitude. The perspective of a message is therefore an interesting factor of persuasive communication to examine, but how to fill in this perspective in communication?

Where in business marketing communication it is often about price, quality and service, this is more complex when it concerns tweens. Tweens generally do not look at price, quality and service. But what do they look at? This differing factor ensures that frequently used communication models in

business will probably not work in deciding which content is particular good for tweens. The question arises which perspective could be used to persuade potential members to choose for a youth organization. For this reason, the factors that can have an influence in deciding whether or not to become a member will be examined. By taking that what tweens consider as important as a starting point, an important step can be taken towards a targeted approach of marketing communication.

## § 2.4 PERSPECTIVE AND TWEENS

First of all, as children develop and move into adolescence, social relationships become increasingly important and peer relationships expand to take a particularly central role in the life of young people (Kaare, Brandtzæg, Heim & Endestad, 2007). At this age, parents become less important than peers in their decision-making processes, identity formation and in validation of their behavior, concluded Harter (1998). Peer groups, therefore, play a central role in the transition of their socialization and identity-forming processes (Meyers, Fisher & Marcoux, 2007). It seems that social relationships are important for the development of tweens. Jones (2002) identified seven developmental needs for early adolescents (tweens) by describing how to establish the service in library, especially for youth, in such a way that is able to attract young adults to actually use these services, because the use of these services can lead to positive outcomes for tweens. One of these seven developmental needs concerned 'positive social interaction': tweens need support, companionship and opportunities to build relationships with adults and peers. Tweens benefit from positive social interaction. That tweens have to socialize is one unique need tweens have, states Jones (2002). Furthermore, research, conducted by Youthpulse (2009) among 3000 children and young people in the age of 8 to 24, has shown that tweens (in particular 8/9-year-olds) feel the need to belong the most. According to Carat (2005), children discover their 'bigger' social environment from the age of 9. The opinion of the parents in some cases becomes less relevant than the opinion of peers. Tweens want to be accepted within the group (Carat, 2005). Forney and Forney (1995) and many other researchers concluded that for tweens, acceptance by peers becomes so important that they will do anything to fit in. The fact that tweens want to be accepted can go quite far, in terms of that they will even look to (criminal) gangs for

social clues, including dressing like them for example, in order to be accepted by peers (Forney & Forney, 1995). So part of targeting tweens is knowing that they are motivated by the feeling that they need to belong. Does the need to belong and being able to build more social relationships also appeal in texts on flyers? It is relevant to explore whether tweens are appealed to social content in texts. The social perspective in a text concentrates for example on the feeling that they need to belong or the ability to make new friends and be around peers.

On the other hand, Jones (2002) stated in the seven developmental needs that tweens also need a chance to prove themselves (competence and achievement), to explore a widening world and reflect on their roles and experiences (self-definition) and to express their interests, which helps them to understand and accept themselves (creative expression). All these developmental needs of tweens point in the direction of a more individual perspective in which questions like the following are raised: where do I belong? Which role do I take? And how long do I take this particular role? (Dekker, de Hart & Faulk; 2007). The individual perspective in a text concentrates more on the personal fulfilment of the tweens, for example a text about learning to be creative.

In existing literature there has not been made a direct comparison of a social perspective vs. an individual perspective. Both perspectives seem to be important for tweens, so this study should point out if the tweens give a preference to one of the two perspectives in persuasive communication.

## § 2.5 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWEENS

*"Up to 7 years children are living in a fantasy world. From 8 years old they learn 'reading comprehension' and it opens a whole new perspective for them. Those children are becoming wiser and get their own opinion". (Beuving, 2010).*

In this study the primary target group will be tweens. Tweens are children in the interim phase from child to teenager. It is important to differentiate between the younger (8-9 years) and the older tweens (10-12 years). Siegel, Livingston & Coffey (2001) state that children in the age of 12 experienced 50%

more in life than 8-year-olds. *"That's like comparing a 60 year old with a 40 year old"*, according to Siegel et al. (2001). In addition, the differentiation is also necessary because the older tweens may have started with puberty already. Zimbardo, Johnson & McCann (2009) state that with girls puberty starts in the age of 11 until 15, but according to Westenberg (2007) this is even earlier, namely from 10 years old for girls and 11,5 years old for boys. Whatever the level of the child is, it is important to take puberty into account, because during puberty children make a genuine intellectual leap. Delfos (2004) concluded that the intellectual capacity of children increases strongly. Thereby, through puberty, their thought processes are becoming more logical, flexible and organized, closely resembling those of adults (Piaget, 1969). Just like adults, they develop the skill to think hypothetically, which means that they are capable of thinking of all kinds of alternatives and to test these to concrete facts (Delfos, 2004). Furthermore, as their cognitive skills develop, they start to develop an interest in social and cultural issues (Berk, 1994), which is facilitated by the availability of greater levels of information from the internet, the media, as well as peers and parents. Younger and older tweens therefore differ in their experience and cognitive skills. In this study the distinction between old and young tweens will therefore be taken into account. To make it clear whether girls and boys differ in their opinions regarding persuasive communication (puberty starts for example earlier in girls than in boys, which affects cognitive skills), the distinction between these sexes will also be taken into account.

## § 2.6 RECAPITALIZATION

Because the number of memberships is decreasing in youth organizations, it is important to look for a way that this decline will stop. In attracting a child to become a member of an organization, persuasive communication can be used. An example of persuasive communication is a flyer. It is a form of persuasive communication that contains a short persuasive, understandable message that potential members can easily process and understand. It is proven that, to reinforce arguments or to make the outcome more desirable and plausible, evidence should be used in order to persuade people. In many studies statistical evidence was proven to be the most persuasive, but in other studies anecdotal

evidence turned out to be more persuasive. Evidence has not been examined in context of tweens. Further research is required to complete this limited information.

The first sub question is therefore stated as:

1. What are the preferences of tweens regarding the type of evidence (anecdotal vs. statistical)?

The perspective of the message is also an important factor that can have an effect on persuasive communication. This study focuses also on the preferences on the perspective (individual vs. social) of tweens. The second sub question is therefore stated as:

2. What are the preferences of tweens regarding the type of perspective (individual vs. social)?

Due to the fact that younger and older tweens differ in their experience and cognitive skills, this study also makes a distinction between younger (8- and 9-year-olds) and older (10- till 12-year-olds) tweens by examining their preferences. Also, in order to make it clear if there are differences between boys and girls, there is made a distinction between boys and girls. This leads to the following sub questions:

3. What are the differences in preferences of a flyer of young tweens and old tweens?
4. What are the differences in preferences of a flyer of boys and girls?

These sub questions will help to answer the main question of this study, formulated as followed:

*What are the preferences of tweens regarding the evidence (anecdotal vs. statistical) and perspective (social vs. individual) in flyers for youth organizations?*

By examining these two types of evidence and the two types of perspective regarding the preferences of tweens, this study can contribute and serve as an introduction to the field of evidence in persuasive communication. This study can, therefore, be seen as scientifically relevant.



### § 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter will give insight in the research design of this study. The study was an explorative qualitative study. Focus groups were organized with each group containing 4 to 6 participants of the same age (8-9 and 10-12-year-olds) and single-sex to discover the preferences of the children regarding the perspective and evidence of the flyers. A total overview (protocol) of the focus groups can be found in appendix A.

#### § 3.1 A METHOD DIRECTED AT CHILDREN

Tweens have a completely different view of things: they act differently, talk differently and see the world differently (McNeal, 1999). The insights that children can provide regarding their preferences are very valuable. However there is a catch: research with children requires other skills than research with adults. Owen (1997) concluded that questionnaires may be inappropriate when measuring children's knowledge, perception and attitudes. Questionnaires may not be an adequate method of inquiry as children's ability to read, write and understand depends on age and cognitive development (Owen, 1997).

A qualitative approach would thus be preferable, according to Wilson & Wood (2004). Several qualitative research methods are used to examine the attitudes of children, for example focus groups, making drawings, in-depth interviews, observation techniques and role-play (Gunter & Furnham, 1998). While in-depth interviews give a lot of information, it is a long and difficult process that the children themselves may find frustrating (Owen, 1999). Group interviews with children, on the other hand, provide children with the possibility to be inspired by each other's ideas and may also help to progress the conversation. The influence of the interviewer in this case is reduced and allows children to react to one another (Wilson & Wood, 2004). Within a focus group children can inspire each other and suggest ideas, which is similar to a sort of brainstorming session. Because the knowledge about children and evidence and perspective in flyers is limited, the use of a focus group is ideal. With a focus group one obtains a quick overview regarding the specific matter and through the use of a focus group one can get information about preferences and the underlying reasons of the preferences.

Observations techniques, role-play and in-depth interviews are techniques that are more suitable when there is already an amount of information about the matter, but what requires more exploration. All in all are focus groups a great way to bring the knowledge and perceptions of the children to light. For this reason this study makes use of focus groups. The focus groups are intended to exploit the preferences of tweens regarding the perspective and evidence of the flyer.

According to Shaw, Brady and Davey (2011) and Gunter and Furnham (1998) there are certain rules that must be taken into account when conducting research among children. For instance, groups should generally be smaller than for adult participants (5-8 is optimal). Another principle taken into account is that joining a group of strangers is daunting for children and young people, so making use of friendship pairs will work better. For this reason, the focus groups took place during the regular evening the members visited CJV. In this way the participants in the focus group all knew each other and it was possible to let children participate in the focus groups with their friends.

## § 3.2 PARTICIPANTS

A total of 6 focus groups took place during the evenings the members visited CJV. A distinction was made between young tweens (8-9 years) and old tweens (10-12 years). In the three groups with young tweens the mean age was 8.2. The mean age in the three groups with old tweens was 10.7.

In addition, girls and boys were separated in order to work with single-sex groups. This finally resulted in 2 groups with girls (old tweens), 1 group with girls (young tweens), 1 group with boys (old tweens) and 2 groups with boys (young tweens). With a total of 29 participants, this means that almost every focus group consisted of 5 participants. Prior to the participation, the parents of each child gave permission.

## § 3.3 MATERIALS

In this research 4 different texts (figure 1 through figure 4) have been used to examine the influence of evidence and perspective on the preferences of tweens. The texts existed of four or five sentences. The used evidence is colored blue, the used perspective is colored pink. To be sure that the quality of

the evidence is guaranteed, the evidence should meet normative criteria.

Normatively strong statistical evidence should consist of a **large sample of cases** that is representative for the population in the claim that it supports (Hornikx, 2008). To meet this criterion the statistical texts were based on a 100 children as a large sample size. Depending on the perspective, the statistical text is a summary of the number of **friendships that have been made (social perspective)**, or the statistical text is based on a 100 children **discovering what they are good at (individual perspective)**.

Normatively strong anecdotal evidence should consist of only **one case** supporting the general claim about a whole population (Hornikx, 2008), in which there has to be shown many similarities and only a few differences between the cases (e.g. the main character and the person who has to be persuaded). The anecdotal evidence consisted therefore of 4 or 5 sentences about one person who had experienced the consequence (e.g. the benefits you have from membership at CJV), as a result of behavior (e.g. becoming a member of CJV). That one person was, depending on the sex of the group, Jesse or Marieke and was 10 years old. In this way the participant who read the text was similar to the main character in the story. Depending on the perspective, the anecdotal text was a story about **knowing friends at CJV (social perspective)**, or the anecdotal text was a story about how **he/she learned new things (individual perspective)**. In order to make a fair comparison, the vividness and comprehensiveness were taken into account by designing each text and there is tried to make them similar to each other. The examples of the anecdotal and statistical texts are presented in figure 1 through 4.

Figure 1 – *Statistical social text*

**Already 100 children have, because they became a member at CJV, learned which things they are very good at. These 100 children have discovered through CJV that they are quite good at working together or that they are very creative. What are you good at? Drop by at club and discover it!**

Figure 2 – *Statistical individualistic text*

**It is a lot of fun at CJV. Last year, therefore, 99 new children have become members! All the children have made new friends, which means that in 2012 at least 99 new friendships were created. 99 children is a lot; will you become the 100<sup>th</sup> member?**

Figure 3 – *Anecdotal social text*

Jesse/Marieke (10 years old) has already been member of CJV for 3 years: "I became a member, because all of my friends were members and said nice things about it every time. I became curious and also went to CJV. Now I can talk with them about what we did! Almost everyone I know is also a member, so that's very nice!"

Figure 4 – *Anecdotal individualistic text*

Jesse/Marieke (10 years) has already been a member of CJV for 3 years: 'Since I became a member at CJV I have learned all kinds of things, for example how to play games in another way and which funny things you can tinker. In this way I discovered that I am very creative. I like to invent new things to create.

### § 3.4 PROCEDURE

After a short introduction in which instructions and explanation was given, the participants had to introduce themselves. After a discussion about flyers in general to determine if they were familiar with flyers (Do they know the meaning of a flyer? Have they seen a flyer before?) and the effect of flyers (Do they read the texts on flyers? What they do pay attention to? Did they ever become a member after seeing a flyer?), the creative and interactive part started. Shaw et al. (2011) concluded that it is necessary to avoid using a 'question and answer' format for the entire session. As a result the use of more interactive and creative activities is recommended. The tweens were asked to design a flyer with a persuasive text for CJV. The task they received was that they had to imagine they were the boss of CJV. This 'boss' had to design a flyer in such a way that as many children as possible would become members. The tweens were asked to think about a text they would put on the flyer in order to increase the amount of memberships. The tweens were allowed to use their own imagination, but they could also make use of the words to create a text that were printed by the researcher.

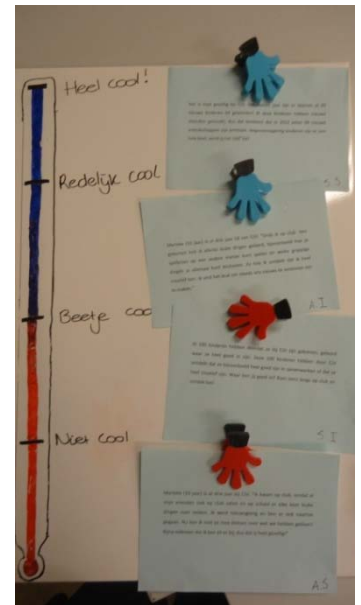
Thereafter, the results of the designed flyers were discussed. By asking the tweens which designed flyer they liked the most, the researcher got an indirect overview of the preferences of the

tweens. The arguments the tweens had, gave the researcher insights about what tweens focus on in deciding which flyer they liked the most.

After this discussion, they were told that the researcher also designed a few flyers and that they had to discuss which text they liked the most. The flyers were part of the experiment to determine which kind of evidence tweens prefer (anecdotal or statistical) and which perspective tweens prefer (social or individual). The two variables resulted in 4 conditions, so the tweens had to discuss 4 different flyers.

Since the use of more interactive activities is recommended (Shaw et al., 2011), the tweens had to use a cool meter for this part of the study. The researcher designed a thermometer on a magnetic board. The thermometer was divided in four sections. The section at the top of the thermometer represented 'very cool' and the section on the bottom of the thermometer represented 'not cool'. With the use of magnetic hands they had to put the flyer in one of the sections, ranging from 'not cool' and 'a little cool' and 'pretty cool' to 'very cool'. Figure 5 shows the used cool meter. Using a strategy, like a cool meter, creates an informal setting where children feel comfortable (Dawson, 2013). Wherever possible it is useful to incorporate active components that use all senses, concludes Dawson (2013), who provides a short summary about focus groups with children. By the use of a 'cool meter' the researcher could determine whether the participants liked or disliked something. For this reason the tweens had to use the cool meter for determining which flyer they liked the best. One by one they were allowed to place the flyers in their correct order (from *not cool* to *very cool*).

Figure 5 - Coolmeter



The focus group session ended with the discussion of which items the tweens missed on the four flyers of the experiment. In this way the researcher got an indirect overview of which items on a flyer the tweens consider as important.

According to Shaw et al. (2011) the focus group should not last too long; for this reason the focus groups lasted on average approximately 40 minutes. Every focus group was audio taped and video recorded, because there was no time for the researcher to write things down. After that, the

audio and video files were transcribed. The first step in many approaches in the analysis of focus group data is to have the entire interview transcribed (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). Transcription not only facilitates further analysis, but it also provides a permanent written record of the focus group discussion.

## § 3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

During the focus groups data was collected. One set of data consists of the 29 flyers, designed by the tweens. Content analysis was the most suitable form of analysis for examining these flyers (§ 3.5.1). The other set of data consists of the citations of the tweens. The citations of the tweens were analyzed through the use of another codebook (3.5.2).

### § 3.5.1 CODEBOOK CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis is defined as an observation method that is used to systematically analyze the symbolic content of a message (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991). Therefore, this study involved a content analysis of 29 flyers, designed by the tweens. Within qualitative content analysis the codebook represents the research instrument. In the coding scheme it should be clear how a particular 'unit' or 'citation' should be distinguished (Wester, 2006).

The codebook was developed using an inductive approach, to make it more abstract and generally applicable (Thomas, 2003; Elo & Kyngäs, 2007). Due to the fact of minimal research on persuasive communication from children, the codes could not be derived from previous literature, so they were created based on the texts the tweens have written. The codebook finally consisted of 6 categories. The first category was 'experiences', which was divided in social and non-social citations. In this category citations were coded like "*CJV is cool*" (non-social) or "*You are together*" (social). The second category was 'attempts to persuade', in which citations were coded like: "*Come to CJV*" or "*Become a member too!*". The third category was 'activities', which was divided in general information about activities, weekly activities and yearly activities. There was made a distinction between citations that said something about activities in general and naming particular activities like "*playing hide-and-seek*" (weekly activity) and "*every summer we have camp!*" (yearly activity). The fourth category was

'information', in which the coder had to indicate if the tween provide practical information, for example, about costs: "*Indicate if the child mentions something about costs. This can be determined as 'The costs each month are...'*". The fifth category was 'members', in which the coder had to indicate if the tweens said something positive or negative about girls and boys at CJV or about having and/or making friends at CJV. The last category was 'additional', in this category citations were coded that had not anything to do with flyers, CJV or persuasive communication. The codebook mainly provides an overview of what tweens consider as important in persuading other tweens. It shows the perspective they used in their flyer, for example, did they focus on the social part (making friends, being together) or did they focus on more actively related information (naming particular activities that are organized). The complete codebook can be found in appendix C.

The first 10 flyers were coded with a pre-compiled codebook. During the coding of these 10 flyers, several codes were added. The researcher and an independent person discussed the new codes and when they agreed, the codes were added. This process was repeated twice. Through these processes, the completeness, unambiguousness and reliability of the codebook (Neuendorf, 2002) have been ensured. In this way, new findings were discussed and added or modified with particular attention to the internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity, which had to be maintained. This means that the text fragments within a category have a high degree of agreement and the differences between the categories should be obvious and clear (Patton, 2002). Once the codes in the codebook were refined, another independent second assessor coded a third of the flyers (N=10) to see if the scheme was reliable. The inter-rater reliability was estimated by calculating Cohen's Kappa, to measure the reliability of the codebook. With a Cohen's Kappa of .898 the codebook turned out 'very good' and therefore very reliable, because coefficients greater than .80 are acceptable (Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken, 2002).

### § 3.5.2 CODEBOOK FOCUS GROUP

Based on the initial reading and expectations, the first step was to develop a classification system for major topics and issues. The statements of the tweens were coded in different main themes. An

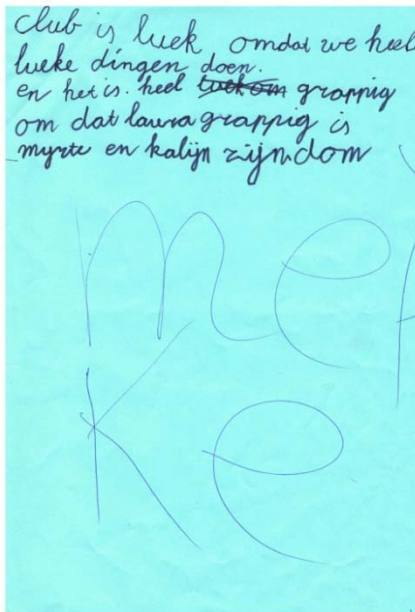
example of a main theme is 'Preference type of evidence' with codes like "*I like it that it is about so many children*" and "*I think the story of Jesse/Marieke is less fun*". The codebook that has been used can be found in appendix D.

In order to determine the inter-rater reliability, both the researcher and an independent second assessor have coded the citations of the tweens. Because the number of usable quotes turned out to be lower than expected, not the usual 15% but approximately 50% have been coded by the second assessor. This is to be sure that the coding scheme is reliable. The percentage of agreement was 94% and the Cohen's kappa was .924. In order to have sufficient reliability in qualitative analysis of verbal data the percentage of agreement should at least be 80 % (Chi, 1997). With a kappa of 0.924 it means that the reliability of the research instrument is 'very good' and it is likely that the codes are correct.



## § 4. RESULTS – PART 1 – CONTENT ANALYSIS

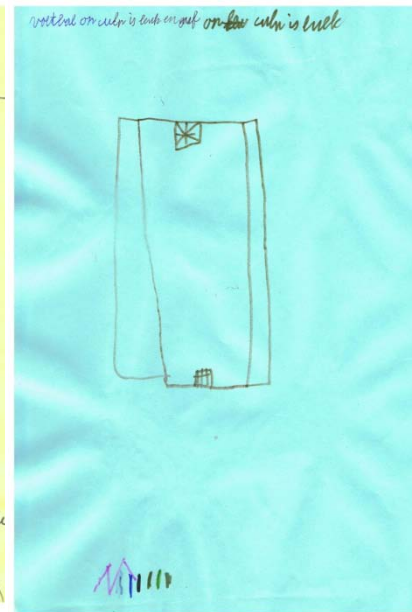
Content analysis aims to provide insight in what kind of content tweens consider important in persuasive communication. In order to find out what tweens indirectly consider as important in persuasive communication, they were asked to design a flyer for their club. This flyer had to be designed in such a way, that other tweens would become members after reading it. The result of these flyers can be seen in figure 6 and appendix E. By the use of a codebook for content analysis several things become clear, which will be described in the paragraph's below.



1.1 – Girl – 8 years



2.2 – Boy – 8 years



3.4 – Boy – 10 years



4.2 – Girl – 11 years



5.1 – Boy – 8 years



6.5 – Girl – 9 years

Figure 6 – Designed flyers

## § 4.1 CONTENT ANALYSIS: THE RESULTS

The codebook has been divided into 5 main categories ('experiences', 'attempts to persuade', 'activities', 'information' and 'members') and 1 last category, 'additional', in which the citations were categorized that did not have anything to do with the subject or did not have any similarity with the other codes. There was a total of 139 citations spread over 29 flyers. Analyzing the designed flyers was based on the citations in the texts (N=139). Table 2 shows the number of times the tweens wrote about the different categories.

Table 2 – Citations per category (N=139)

Content	Category	Citations	Citations (in total)
<i>Experiences</i>			<i>44</i>
	Non-social citations	24	
	Social citations	20	
<i>Attempts to persuade</i>			<i>13</i>
<i>Activities</i>			<i>30</i>
	General	14	
	Weekly activities	10	
	Yearly activities	6	
<i>Information</i>			<i>25</i>
	Clubhouse	4	
	Leadership	3	
	Costs	3	
	Organizational content	13	
	Camp	2	
<i>Members</i>			<i>22</i>
	Friends of school	2	
	Making friends	2	
	Having friends	3	
	Girls positive	7	
	Girls negative	5	
	Boys positive	2	
	Girls negative	1	
<i>Additional</i>			<i>5</i>
<b>Total</b>			<b>139</b>

It can be seen that in 44 citations the tweens wrote about an experience with CJV. The 44 citations can be divided in 24 non-social citations and 20 social citations. In the non-social citations the tweens provided, for example, a positive view regarding their experience with CJV, like: "*Club is nice*", "*I love club*" or "*Club is good for entertainment*". The social citations were about the social part of CJV (like being together in a group), for example: "*It is cozy*" and "*you are together*". Moreover, 13 citations contained a persuasive message, like "*Come to club*" or "*Become a member!*".

The table shows that 30 citations were about the organized activities at CJV. In part of these citations (N=14) tweens wrote about activities in general, for example, "*We play nice games at CJV*" and "*At CJV we do a lot of nice games*". Of the 30 citations, 10 citations were about the weekly activities that are organized at CJV. In these citations the tweens were more specific about the activities and they provided examples of games they play on a regular club night like "*Nachtwacht*" and "*We play hide and seek in the dark*". The last 6 citations about activities were about a yearly activity, namely camp. The tweens wrote citations like: "*every year we go camping*" or "*in summer break camp is organized*".

Table 2 also shows the number of times in which tweens provided information about practical things, like the clubhouse, the costs etcetera. In a total of 25 citations tweens conveyed some form of information. In 4 of these 25 citations tweens wrote about the new clubhouse, which, at the time they had to design the flyer, had not been opened yet. In 3 of the 25 citations the tweens mentioned the leadership at CJV, for example "*The leaders from the groups are sweet*". Another 3 citations were about the costs, like "*It costs only 5 euros per month*". Of the 25 citations, 13 citations mentioned organization content, in the form of presenting the names (of the different groups at CJV) and the ages of club members, or, for example, a list of names of the children who were a member in their group at that moment. Finally, the last 2 citations in the category "information" conveyed practical information about summercamp, like how many days you go to camp, but also what other children can expect ("*You are in a group and you try to win games, and if you are in a good team you can win a price at the end of the week*").

The last main category 'members', indicates the amount of citations tweens produced about the members of CJV, namely 22 citations. This was, among others, about knowing friends from school at CJV (N=2), the ability to make friends (N=2) and having friends at CJV (N=3). In 7 citations of these 22 citations the tweens wrote something positive about girls, like "*The girls at CJV are so nice*". However, in 5 citations the tweens wrote something unkind, like "*Karlijn is often irritating*" or "*The girls are also sometimes stupid and annoying*". The girls only wrote about girls, but boys wrote about boys and girls. In 2 citations the boys wrote positively about boys and there was 1 negative citation about boys, namely: "*the boys could be irritating too*".

In the last category 'additional' citations were placed which did not have anything to do with the codes that have been shown, but also did not seem to have a relation with persuasive communication. There were 5 citations that tweens had written which could not be coded properly. These were statements like "We are cool crickets and listen well" or "zombie man".

Besides the fact that 2 citations contained a social perspective (making friends), this analysis shows that tweens did not make use of a clear perspective or use some kind of a type of evidence.

## § 4.2 REASON TEXT OWN FLYER

While the designing of the flyer took place during the focus groups, the researcher was able to ask the tweens what their motivation for their design was. For the record: analyzing the designed flyers was based on the citations in the texts (N=139), since it was not possible to do this per tween because some tweens wrote extensive texts. Analyzing the citations in the focus groups was done per each tween (N=29).

During the focus groups it became clear that 6 tweens wrote their flyer with the motivation that they could not think of something else or that they had no idea why they wrote it down. These were mainly the boys, who did not write a long text in the first place. They needed a lot of encouragement to even write a (persuasive) text. They found it difficult and had no ideas. Their motivation did not go beyond citations like "*No idea*" and "*I knew nothing else*". A great group (N=11) motivated that their text

explained it 'just the way it is' which mostly contained phrases like "*Simple: that's the way it is*" or "*Well, that's just the way it is*". Due to the fact that the cognitive skills and experiences differ for young and old tweens, it can be expected that, perhaps, young tweens find it more difficult to think of reasons why they wrote something down. However, not having a real motivation did not only emerge in the groups with young tweens. The statements emerged at focus group 1 (mean age 8.2 years), 3 (mean age 10.5 years) and 6 (mean age 10.9 years). Another 6 tweens said they wrote more based on their feeling, for example "*this came first into my mind*" or "*this was actually the first thing I thought of*". It was mostly the girls who motivated from their sense (5 girls vs. 1 boy). A total of 4 children stated as motivation that they liked club so much, so for that reason they wrote their particular text. Only 2 girls wrote their text focusing on sharing of knowledge: "*I just want to let everyone know that it is so much fun*" and "*I think it is important that they know about what clubs there are and how you can join them*".

#### § 4.3 APPRECIATION OTHER DESIGNED FLYERS

In order to find out indirectly what they consider as important in persuasive communication on flyers, the tweens got the task to view the other designed flyers in their group and to decide who did the best job. It is interesting to note that a great majority pointed out their own flyer to be the best. The most frequent answer to the question: "Which flyer do you like the most?" was "*my own flyer*" or "*mine*". The older girls were better able to state that their own flyer "had failed" and to point out other flyers as the best. Two tweens pointed out that the flyer with the most information had to be the best flyer, because it was more useful. A few tweens (N=2) said that the best flyer was the flyer which would made potential members curious the most. One boy determined that his flyer was the best, because he had used the most words. There were also 2 tweens who did not have an opinion.

#### § 4.4 YOUNG VS. OLD TWEENS

Looking at young tweens and old tweens it can be seen that the young tweens wrote mainly about their experience, like "*club is nice*" and a little about the organized activities, like "*we play hide and seek*". In the groups with old tweens the tweens were more able to write about the opportunity to make

friends, or to provide practical information, so they wrote more extensively. Young tweens seemed not to have thought of that at all and were also the tweens who provided the most statements that did not have anything to do with CJV in particular, but more with the people that were around (for example: talking mainly negative about their group members, in ways of "*Karlijn is irritating*" or "*boys are stupid*").

In the motivations considering why they designed the text the way they did, differences between young and old tweens cannot be found. Young tweens used just as many different motivations than the old tweens. By deciding which flyer they appreciated the most, a difference was found. It could be noticed that more than half of the young tweens liked their own text better than the other designed texts.

Looking at the designs it can be concluded that young tweens seem to be more visually oriented than the old tweens, regarding the fact that young tweens used drawings (for example of the clubhouse) a lot more than old tweens. Although the fact that all the groups were told many times that the focus should be on the texts, the young tweens frequently asked if they, "*please*", could make a drawing too.

## § 4.5 BOYS VS. GIRLS

Some differences were found between boys and girls concerning the design of their own flyer. The first thing that can be noticed is that girls are more extensive in writing than boys. Most boys used just one or two sentences on the flyers, while the girls used a minimum of two sentences (most of the time many more). The boys provided a mainly positive view of their experience with club and wrote about organized activities. The girls, on the other hand, wrote about their experiences extensively (positive view, social part and persuasive arguments), their opinion about activities, the members at CJV (the ability of making friends and having friends) and were mainly busy with providing practical information about costs and organizational content.

By motivating their own flyer, there was found a difference between boys and girls. The great majority of the boys motivations was that they "*could not think of something else*" and "*that it is just the way it*

*is*". The girls indicated that they wrote based on their feeling, like "*this came first into my mind*" and "*this was actually the first thing I could think of*". It were also the girls who told they wrote their flyer to provide information so that the reader knows about how much fun it is or the practical "how" and "what". By deciding which flyer they liked the most of the other designed flyers, the boys were pretty happy with their own design ("*I like my own the most*") or they did not care. The girls were more specific in terms like, "*this flyer makes more curious*" and "*this flyer contains most information*".

## § 5. RESULTS – PART 2 – CITATIONS FOCUS GROUPS

In the next paragraphs the results of the 6 organized focus groups will be discussed. First the general knowledge about flyers will be discussed (5.1), followed by the preferences of evidence of the tweens (5.2), the preferences of perspective of the tweens (5.3), characteristics of a flyer (5.4) and ends with the differences between groups (5.5 & 5.6). As previously stated, the analyzing of the focus group was done per each tween (N=29).

### § 5.1 GENERAL KNOWLEDGE FLYERS & PERSUASION

Approximately 23 tweens had heard of a flyer or seen a flyer before. Most of them had seen flyers during festivities in local villages, on walls and in schools. The question if they read the text on flyers had different outcomes. Only 6 tweens mentioned that they read the text on a flyer and 10 tweens said they never read the text (*“deadly boring”, “not interested”*). All the others noted that it depends whether they read a flyer or not. It depends on where the flyer is from and what the flyer is about, after that they consider if they want to read it or not. During the talk about flyers, 20 flyers of different associations and institutions were on the table. When the researcher asked which one they liked the most (to determine indirectly what they look at: text or pictures), they pointed mainly to flyers that were familiar to them. The flyer from the local volleyball club, the theatre school and the local music association were most pointed at. When they were asked why they liked those particularly flyers the most, they told something about a neighbor (*“Yes, children and their parents in my street are members of that. And uncle Ron and Armin, who helps uncle Ron, are members too”*), a friend or themselves (*“Yes, we are members there”, or “Yes I was a member of theatre school Luna. Hated it.”*), who they knew as members of the association. Recognition/familiarity and liking are very close to each other in the eyes of tweens.

A total of 6 tweens have become a member of a local association after they saw a flyer. Moreover, those 6 tweens were all girls, so the boys never became a member after seeing a flyer. This can be due to the fact that the boys, as they mainly admitted, barely read the text. The question about



becoming a member provided more insight about the reasons why tweens become members. A lot of tweens stated that they become a member because *“my friends were already member”*, or *“because my friend asked me to come and look for once”* and *“I became a member because I knew no one at the other gymnastic club, so I changed to where I knew other children”*. It looks like becoming a member depends on whether the boys and girls are familiar with an association.

## § 5.2 PREFERENCES ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE VS. STATISTICAL EVIDENCE

The tweens obviously did not like the texts written with anecdotal evidence. The story in which Jesse or Marieke told of their own experiences with CJV delivered the most negative results. Most of the time the tweens stated that *“the stories of Jesse were not so nice”* and *“the stories sounded boring”*. Some tweens even stated that the *“stories were annoying”* and in recommendations for flyers, they even said that there should be *“less Marieke, more club”*. The only girls who liked the text written with anecdotal evidence, according to the citations in the focus group, were those who had to decide which one they liked more for section 2 and 3 on the cool meter (respectively “pretty cool” and “a little cool”). Although it was expected that anecdotal evidence would be preferred by tweens, this was not the case. In table 3 (page 43) an overview is presented of the results regarding the cool meter. Number 1 through number 4 present the order of coolness, in which number 1 is a very cool text according to the tweens and number 4 is the least cool text. They had to order the texts by group, so they had to discuss which flyer should be on top and why. In this way the researcher was able to find out the underlying arguments why one flyer should be above the other.

It is quite obvious that anecdotal texts are rated less cool than the statistical texts. There is only one exception, because group 1 did rate an anecdotal text as “pretty cool”. The differences between the perspectives (anecdotal social and anecdotal individualistic) are minimal: both texts did not score high on the cool meter. Therefore, the perspective may vary in the anecdotal evidence text: this does not seem to have an influence on preference of the evidence.

In contrast with anecdotal evidence, statistical evidence was more preferred by the tweens. The stories about a 100 children were well received. A total of 26 tweens said something positive about the

statistical texts, varying from *"it is nice because it is about so many children"* to *"if 99 people are already members, you become very curious"*. Some tweens were also very enthusiastic because the number of members was high (*"I like this text too, 100 children are so many!"*). Not one boy or girl was negative about the statistical texts. In 5 of the 6 groups the two statistical texts were rated as coolest, which means the tweens preferred the statistical texts more. In almost every focus group after reading the texts out loud, the first reaction was that the one about the 100 children should be on top (*"The one about 100 children is very cool!"*). The difference between statistical social and statistical individualistic is more minimal than in the anecdotal texts. In two groups the statistical individualistic text scored higher on coolness than the statistical social text. These two groups consisted of boys, so it looks like the boys prefer the text about a 100 children who learned something (SI) more than the groups with girls, who all rated the text about 99 friends higher on coolness (SS) than the individualistic text (SI).

Table 3 – *Overview order of coolness*

Group	Gender	Mean age	Order of coolness
1	Girls	8.2 (N=6)	1. Statistical Social 2. Anecdotal Individualistic 3. Statistical Individualistic 4. Anecdotal Social
2	Boys	8.2 (N=5)	1. Statistical Individualistic 2. Statistical Social 3. Anecdotal Social 4. Anecdotal Individualistic
3	Boys	10.5 (N=4)	1. Statistical Individualistic 2. Statistical Social 3. Anecdotal Social 4. Anecdotal Individualistic
4	Girls	10.8 (N=5)	1. Statistical Social 2. Statistical Individualistic 3. Anecdotal Social 4. Anecdotal Individualistic
5	Boys	8.3 (N=4)	1. Statistical Social 2. Statistical Individualistic 3. Anecdotal Individualistic 4. Anecdotal social
6	Girls	10.9 (N=5)	1. Statistical Social 2. Statistical Individualistic 3. Anecdotal Individualistic 4. Anecdotal Social
Total		9.1 (N=29)	1. Statistical Social 2. Statistical Individualistic 3. Anecdotal Individualistic 4. Anecdotal Social

In summary, the tweens preferred the text written with statistical evidence more than anecdotal evidence, due to certain reasons:

- The stories of Jesse and Marieke (anecdotal evidence) were seen as boring and annoying. A possible explanation might be that the vividness of the text was not correct, but this cannot be said with certainty.

- Only one group (young girls) rated an anecdotal text relatively high (second place on cool meter, focus group 1)
- The stories with large numbers were received very well by the tweens, not one tween was negative about the statistical text.
- Within the statistical texts, the boys rated statistical text with an individualistic perspective higher and the girls rated the statistical text with an social perspective higher
- Regarding the type of evidence, differences between young tweens and old tweens cannot be found.

### § 5.3 PREFERENCES INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE VS. SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

Looking at the citations of the focus groups it becomes clear that the tweens regarded the individual perspective positively (N=8), but also negatively (N=4). The positive comments were mainly concentrated on the fact that they could learn something *"I like the last text best, because it says you can learn stuff"* and *"We do learn a lot here, that is so nice"*. Someone did like the individualistic text better because: *"the girl in the story learned something, that is what I like"*. She saw it more as a "happy ending" and therefore liked the text better. However, there were some tweens who did not like the individualistic text. Their arguments were, for example, that it was boring to read, but also that *"it is weird that she learns something: in this way it looks like a school, even though that is not the case"*. Mainly the girls in group 4 were critical regarding the individualistic texts. What must be kept in mind is that in 3 of the 6 groups no one said something about the individualistic parts in the text. In those groups the perspective was not noticed or the tweens did not have an opinion about it or were focused on something else (the way the text was written, or, for example, the social parts that stood out).

Something all the tweens agreed about was that the text, about becoming a member because a friend is also a member, was not done. More than half of the tweens (N=16) were negative about the social perspective, particularly the social perspective in the anecdotal written text. The text that said that Jesse or Marieke had become member, because their friends were already members resulted in many

negative reactions. The reactions varied from *"It is stupid that friends of him are members: that doesn't necessarily mean he has to enter"* to *"I just think that if your friends are members, this doesn't mean you have to become a member too"*. One tween even stated that *"if you enter because your friends are members you really don't belong. You only belong if you really like it"*. This means that tweens do really think about social pressure/belonging, but do not want to act in that kind of way themselves. There were also tweens (N=3) who were positive about the social perspective, because the text stated that *"you can make new friends"* or *"get to know new children"*, which they really appreciated.

Looking at the many negative reactions one might expect that the social perspective did not score high on the tweens, but that was certainly not the case. Although it seems that the varying perspective did not influence the evidence, because anecdotal texts were predominantly rated lower than statistical texts, a great difference can be seen when looking from the perspective point of view. The social perspective scored the highest and the lowest place on the cool meter, which indicates that there is in fact a difference. Looking at the designed texts this can be due to the fact that social content in the anecdotal text was more focused on knowing friends (negative reaction) and the social content in the statistical text was more focused on making friends (positive reaction), which could explain the great differences between both.

In summary, it is less clear than in the case of evidence, which perspective is preferred the most. Although the tweens were very negative about the social perspective, there have not been many tweens who said something about the individual perspective. With the information available, it can be carefully stated that the individual perspective was preferred more by tweens, because:

- 8 tweens were positive because the individual perspective concentrated on the fact that they could learn something. On the contrary, 4 tweens were negative about the individual perspective ("because CJV is not school").
- The tweens were very negative about the social perspective (in combination with the anecdotal text): their motivation was that it is stupid to become a member because your friend is a member too.

## § 5.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF A FLYER

To get an overview of what children think is important in a flyer, some questions were asked afterwards about what they missed or what should be added to the flyer. Eleven tweens stated that only text was not enough and that the flyer could use some photos (*"photos of the new clubhouse"* and *"silly photos"* and *"photos of us playing together"*). Some tweens noted that some decorations would be nice (N=4). The older tweens (girls) also made clear that information is very important (start times, ages, location, telephone numbers). This was not on the flyer, because this could have distracted the tweens from what the study really was about (evidence and content), but they did consider it as important (*"Well if you read the flyer, you don't know what the time and stuff is"*). There were also some tweens who especially appreciated the questions that were asked in the texts (N=4). They pointed out that it makes children more curious (*"It is more nice, like if, there is some kind of question. Because you become curious"*). Overall the children would like the texts even more if they contain some photos, decorations, information and questions, in which must be ensured that the text is not too long (*"like yawn it is too long, I fall asleep"*).

## § 5.5 YOUNG VS. OLD TWEENS

When looking at the differences of young vs. old tweens it can be seen that young tweens are less extensive in their motivations about statistical and anecdotal evidence. When someone in the young groups suggested that the statistical text about a 100 children was the best, the rest of the group followed most of the time. The boys and girls in the young groups were mainly surprised and curious by the high numbers, where in the old groups the tweens could motivate that the high numbers could also make other children curious (they thought one step ahead again). It is also remarkable that the old tweens stated that anecdotal evidence was not good, because it was just about one person (*"When it is just about one person, I just think: forget it"*). Both young and old tweens were negative about anecdotal evidence, so no differences could be found there. Regarding the perspective that has been used in the text, it can be seen that the tweens are divided equally in being negative about the social perspective text. There were only old tweens who liked the social perspective, but this was only in the

case of the social perspective in the statistical text (they liked to read that you could make new friends: “*you get to know new children*”). In table 4 an overview is given of the difference between young and old tweens.

Table 4 – *Overview of differences young vs. old tweens*

	Young tweens	Old tweens
Evidence (in order of very cool to not cool)	Statistical Social	Statistical Social
	Statistical individualistic	Statistical Individualistic
	Anecdotal Individualistic	Anecdotal Social
	Anecdotal Social	Anecdotal Individualistic
Perspective	Individual perspective positive	Individual perspective positive &
	Social perspective negative	negative Social perspective positive & negative
Attractiveness flyer	Pictures and decorations important	Practical information important

## § 5.6 GIRLS VS. BOYS.

The differences between boys and girls can also be looked at (for an overview see table 5). It can be seen that regarding the evidence the girls had slightly more positive comments about the statistical evidence, but in the overview it can be seen that both girls and boys placed the two statistical texts on top. The boys and girls were both equally negative about the anecdotal evidence, and only a few girls liked the story about Marieke more (in comparison with the anecdotal individualistic text). Mainly the boys were positive about the individualistic perspective, because “*you can learn something*”. Girls were only negative about the individualistic perspective (“*CJV is not school!*”). However, these were just two girls. On the other hand, only girls (a total of 3) were positive about the social perspective. The social perspective in anecdotal evidence generated the most negative reactions, mainly coming from girls because the boys were only good for 4 citations. Regarding the attractiveness of the flyer, the boys mostly concluded that there should be pictures and liked the texts with a question in it, while the girls stated that there should be more decorations and pictures, tone of voice (humor, personalization)

and practical information. In this case the girls were more critical about the missing items on the flyers than the boys, who chose again for the easiest way: *"it's already okay"*, *"No, I don't miss anything"*.

Table 5 – *Overview of differences between boys and girls*

	Boys	Girls
Evidence (in order of very cool to not cool)	Statistical Individualistic Statistical Social Anecdotal Social Anecdotal Individualistic	Statistical Social Statistical Individualistic Anecdotal Individualistic Anecdotal Social
Perspective	Individualistic perspective positive Social perspective negative	Individual perspective negative Social perspective positive & negative
Attractiveness flyer	Pictures & questions in text are important	Decorations, pictures, tone of voice and practical information are important



## § 6. CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

In this paragraph the main findings of this study will be discussed. In addition, the limitations of this study will be discussed and suggestions for further research are given.

### § 6.1 GENERAL CONCLUSION

In this qualitative study it was examined which preferences tweens have regarding evidence (statistical vs. anecdotal) and regarding perspective (individual vs. social) in a flyer for a youth organization. This study has been conducted based on the main question:

*What are the preferences of tweens regarding the evidence (anecdotal vs. statistical) and perspective (social vs. individual) in flyers for youth organizations?*

This study shows that tweens do have preferences regarding the way a flyer is written. The results show clearly that tweens prefer statistical evidence over anecdotal evidence, but the tweens were less clear about the perspective. In the next paragraphs the variables will be discussed using the previously shown sub-questions.

#### 6.1.1. THE PREFERENCES OF EVIDENCE IN FLYERS

In this study it is proven that tweens prefer the statistical over the anecdotal text. This is in line with the large amount of studies that also proved that statistical evidence is more persuasive than anecdotal evidence (e.g. Wells & Harvey, 1977; Dickson, 1982; Baesler, 1991; Allen & Preis, 1994; Baesler & Burgoon, 1994; Slater & Rouner, 1996; Allen et. al, 2000; Hoeken, 2001a; Hoeken & Hustinx, 2002; Hoeken & Hustinx, 2003; Greene & Brinn, 2003; Hornikx, 2005; Hoeken & Hustinx, 2009). It is not in line with what was slightly expected in this study focusing on tweens. Although the use of a main character (celebrity endorser or a promotional character) in television commercials appeals to tweens and is therefore widespread in food advertising on popular channels (Bouland, Harrold, Kirkham & Halford; 2012), this is not the case in written texts. The tweens did not prefer the use of anecdotal evidence, even though they did match with the main character (Byrne & Nelson, 1965), because the main character showed identifying characteristics so that the tween could relate to the person in the

story (Land, 2009; Green et. al, 2010). The effect, creating a favorable attitude when the main character is recognizable and has much credibility, did not occur. The anecdotal evidence stories were seen as boring and annoying. The majority of the tweens was negative about the use of anecdotal evidence. The tweens were particularly impressed with the large sample size that was used in the statistical evidence. Not one tween was negative about the statistical evidence. It can be concluded that tweens seem to be sensitive to sample size, which is in contrast with a study of Tversky and Kahneman (1973) with adults, who stated that as long as the example used in anecdotal evidence is regarded as similar to the issue under consideration, it does not matter whether the evidence consists of only one example or two hundred. It is possible that this assumption only applies to adults and not to tweens.

Another possible explanation for this unexpected result could be the fact that a written text is not perceived in the same way as a television commercial by the tweens. It turned out that especially young tweens are more visually oriented and are more focused on recognition. It is possible that the use of a celebrity has more impact because the fact that it heightens their attention by virtue of visual and aural cues (Ganz et al., 2007). Having said that, it is probably not about seeing a familiar (celebrity) face, but more seeing an image anyhow (because they are visually oriented). The fact that tweens suggested that they would like to see a photo on the flyer, is in line with this assumption. Thereby, because the tweens were focused on recognition, in the anecdotal written text someone told a story the tweens did not know and recognized. The tweens were maybe, therefore, not capable of imagining the main character. This could explain why many tweens asked about the main character several times: Who is this? Is this someone at club? In which the researcher had to say that the person they were reading about was “fictive” and that the main character “was made up”. However, they did not appreciate the anecdotal text less after hearing that, their decision about which text was better was at that time already made: the anecdotal text was not good at all. The fact that anecdotal evidence did not work out for tweens in the case of written texts is something that needs to be examined in the future.

### 6.1.2 THE PREFERENCES OF PERSPECTIVES IN FLYERS

This study did not show a great preference of tweens for either the individual perspective or the social perspective. Due to the fact that not much has been said about the individual perspective, it is difficult to compare the two perspectives. Since the perspective of the message (individual vs. social) has not been compared in existing literature and both perspectives seem to be important for tweens, there were no expectations regarding which perspective would be more persuasive. Although previous research has shown that tweens feel the need to belong the most (Youthpulse, 2009) and that, therefore, the acceptance of peers becomes very important (Forney & Forney, 1995), the tweens in this study indicated that this topic should not occur in persuasive texts. A large majority of the tweens was strikingly negative about the social perspective. A persuasive text that aims for readers to become a member because a friend is a member is not preferred by tweens at all. This is, in fact, a remarkable result, because the children themselves had eventually all joined CJV because a friend was already a member (paragraph 5.1). Thus, the tweens are very determined that it is “not done”, but did act in this way themselves. They concluded that children have to like it themselves, which could have been a motivation for themselves during the time they became members (but which is forgotten, for example). The acceptance of peers is indeed important for tweens, but it is probably something they will not talk about when considering a membership (because it is obviously “not done”).

The individual perspective led to different but few results; some tweens were positive, but other tweens were negative. A couple of tweens preferred to read about the fact that you can learn something at the organization, which corresponds with the idea that tweens consider “competence and achievement” (personal fulfillment) as important (Jones, 2002), and which can therefore help to persuade tweens to become a member. The tweens that were negative stated that an organization like CJV (for free time) should not use the individual perspective, because, in this way, it looks too much like school: something they are not interested in.

A possible explanation for the lack of comments about the individual perspective is 1) that the tweens were mainly concentrated on the social perspective and did not notice the differences between

the two perspectives and 2) the tweens did not know they had to comment specifically on the perspective; they were asked to motivate their choice, in which their motivation also could be directed more to the effect of the types of evidence or the social perspective instead of the individual perspective.

Due to the fact that almost no tween was enthusiastic about the social perspective, it can be concluded that by tweens the individual perspective is preferred over the social perspective.

### 6.1.3 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GROUPS

The third and fourth sub questions of this study concentrated on differences between young and older tweens and between boys and girls. Because there is a difference between cognitive skills of young and old tweens, differences between the groups were expected. Differences were, first of all, noticeable in the reactions and motivations of young tweens and older tweens. In this study it was visible that the older tweens had a stronger intellectual capacity (Delfos, 2004), because the older tweens were more able “to think one step ahead” and were more able to motivate their choices. The task they had to fulfill (writing a flyer) was better understood by the older tweens than by the younger tweens. This can probably be related to the fact that older tweens better developed the skill to think hypothetically, something that starts to develop during puberty (Delfos, 2004). Older tweens were better able to imagine themselves as being a boss of CJV and needed less explanation regarding the task. The young tweens asked for more clarification many times. The fact that the cognitive skills differed also emerged in their own designing of a flyer. Young tweens were more superficial in their texts than older tweens. Older tweens used, next to the same superficial information that the young tweens used, more arguments and information on their flyers and also motivated that flyers particularly need practical information. Overall, determining which designed flyer of the tweens was the best, was a difficult task for both young and old tweens. One girl noticed that another flyer was better, but said “*No offence, but...*”. It is possible that the tweens found it difficult to point out someone who did better, because, for instance, someone may get hurt.

Regarding the evidence, no differences were found; young tweens as well as old tweens did not prefer the anecdotal evidence. Regarding the perspective it is noticeable that young tweens are positive about the individual perspective, whereas old tweens are only negative about the individual perspective. An even more striking result is that young and old tweens were negative about the social perspective, something that does not correspond with the results in the research of Youthpulse (2009) that had shown that particularly 8/9-year-olds (young tweens) feel the need to belong the most.

Additionally, the young tweens were more visually oriented than the older tweens. The young tweens had more of a tendency to illustrate their flyer with drawings. Both young and old tweens liked to see more images (photos, drawings) in flyers, particularly of children they know.

It can be concluded that it is useful to take the differences between younger and older tweens into account because they differ in their motivation. Young tweens and older tweens also differ in their preference for perspective. On the other hand, this study shows that there are no differences in preferences between young and old tweens regarding evidence.

Some differences can be found between the girls and the boys. In this study it seems that the boys did not want to put too much effort in thinking of motivations and therefore chose the most easiest way: not giving a real argument. One might think that it is possible that the boys are not as cognitively capable as the girls, but many studies stated that boys' underachievement compared to girls had nothing to do with intelligence. Study after study showed that in terms of cognitive ability, boys and girls are similar. The differences we see nowadays depend, however, on the willingness of the boys to invest effort, which is much lower than that of girls (Anders, Macelvany & Baumert, 2010; Hannover & Kessels, 2011; Helbig, 2012). The differences, therefore, cannot be related to the cognitive ability, but to the fact that the effort and engagement that boys are willing to perform is less than that of girls. Although the fact that the boys did not want to put too much effort in their motivations, some differences were found between boys and girls regarding their preferences in a flyer.

Both boys and girls were positive about the statistical evidence texts and were also equally negative about anecdotal evidence. A difference between boys and girls regarding evidence cannot be

found. A difference can be found regarding the perspective. The girls were negative about the individual perspective and the boys were positive about the individual perspective. The girls were slightly positive about the social perspective, but the boys were only negative about the social perspective. In this case a great difference can be found: girls prefer a social perspective (which is related to the subject that it is possible to make friends) and boys prefer an individual perspective.

By designing a flyer for tweens these differences should be taken into account, so that the designer is able to take a more targeted approach to persuasive communication.

## § 6.2 LIMITATIONS

Just like every study, this study has some limitations. The limitations will be discussed in this paragraph and are related to the participants and the research instrument.

### 1. Tweens and this research method

Although Gunter & Furnham (1998) have provided an overview of proper research methods that can be used in research with children, it is not entirely certain if the method used in this study (focus group) is the most appropriate method, because it also has some disadvantages. It is possible that the tasks were too difficult or that the concentration level was too low, despite the variation that was used in the method (interactive tasks like designing a flyer on their own and making use of the cool meter), because the young tweens showed several remarkable actions during the focus groups. For example, something that occurred during the design task is what is called the “aping mechanism”. This “aping mechanism” occurred mainly in the groups with young tweens. In many groups there was a lot of imitating and “aping” of each other, so a majority of the designed flyers were almost the same. If one tween started with one sentence or a term, almost every tween in the group adopted it. They often asked each other about what they wrote down and the tweens also looked at the design of their neighbours. During the focus groups many tweens were parroting. This is probably due to uncertainty or the need to belong, which is, as stated earlier, important for tweens.

Another perhaps strange peculiarity the young tweens showed was that they were busy

embarrassing each other and writing unkind things about other children in the group. In groups with boys, they were talking about girlfriends and girl crushes, thereby embarrassing each other. In groups with girls they were busy writing unkind things like "*Karlijn is often irritating*" or "*Laura is crazy*".

In addition, the participants in this study were already a member of CJV and were not potential members. Although adults are often capable of imaging a particular situation, it is unknown whether the (young) children are also capable of doing that. Through the use of qualitative research instead of quantitative research this factor could be taken into account more, because the researcher could explain the task more often than once in order to ensure that every child knew the purpose of the study. By the use of quantitative research this would have been much harder to realize.

Altogether it seems that the tasks in the focus groups were a little too difficult to fulfill, particularly for the young tweens. The remarkable actions they showed indicate that this research method is maybe not the ideal research method for such young children. Until now it continues to be a guess which research method is appropriate, because research on ideal research methods with children is minimal.

## 2. Quality of research material not optimal

After describing the results it was noticeable that the results showed a great difference between the preferences of tweens regarding the social perspective. When one looks at the designed texts this probably is due to the fact that the social perspective in the anecdotal text was more focused on knowing friends (led to a negative reaction) and the social perspective in the statistical text was more focused on making friends (led to a positive reaction). While designing these texts, this difference in focus was not noticed. The texts have, however, not been presented to the target group by means of a pre-test. With a pre-test it also would have been possible to determine if the texts were all equal vivid and comprehensible. The texts about Jesse and Marieke were perceived as boring and annoying. It might be possible that with a maybe more vivid text, the text would not be seen as boring. A pre-test could have shown the difference and would have been valuable, but again, is hard to fulfill considering

the age of the tweens. The question is whether there is a possibility to pre-test the text with tweens, because tweens are probably not capable of finding these differences between the texts.

### § 6.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The limitations in this research have led to ideas for further research. Below a short overview is given about these suggestions for further research.

#### 1. Extend research on the effects of evidence and perspective on tweens in persuasive texts

This study can be added to a series of studies based on (the persuasiveness) of evidence. The effect of evidence on adults has been researched often because of contrasting results, but this is the first study that is concentrated on tweens. Although tweens are not primarily the group to think of when examining evidence (doing research with children requires some adjustments), this can be very interesting and is important. Not only for youth organizations, but also other associations like theater and sports can benefit from more research. In addition, in order to persuade students to choose their (secondary) school, schools often use flyers. By having more knowledge about how to create a persuasive text that fits the preferences of the tweens, an important step can be taken in persuading potential students, for example. Finally, these results are not only applicable to flyers, but can also be applicable to other forms of (written) communication and it is therefore valuable to extend research.

#### 2. Do specific research on the effects of a main character in television commercials and a main character in a written text in the context of tweens

Although the use of a main character seems to work in television commercials directed towards tweens, in this study it is proven that a main character in a written text does not work. Further research should reveal if the positive results of celebrity endorsers could also be translated to written texts. An example of a study can be to determine if presenting a picture of the main character next to the story has the same effects as a written story without a picture. Research of van der Meij (2013) showed for example that students of elementary school did better on skills when there was an image of a



(pedagogical) agent presented next to the written message. The use of an agent, or in this case an image of the main character, can probably result in different outcomes and is worthwhile to examine.

### 3. Examine if persuasive texts can have an influence on behavior

This study was concentrated on the preferences of the tweens regarding evidence and perspective. Although preferences of the tweens are important to determine, they provide an isolated view. It is useful for further research to determine if persuasive texts can influence the behavior, by examining, for example, the behavioral intention after seeing a flyer. Do tweens want to become a member after seeing a flyer? Is a flyer an appropriate form of persuasive communication directed towards tweens?

### 4. Extend the research on how to involve tweens in research and appropriate methods

Only Gunter & Furnham (1998) provide a clear overview of the methods that can be used involving tweens in research. It is useful to extend research on how to involve tweens and which methods can be used to interest them to participate in a study. Tweens are not the easiest group to work with, but have interesting ideas about things. Tweens themselves want to be heard, but also have to be heard. If they are given the chance to express their opinion more often and given the chance to be the expert as in this study, they can be very important in further research.

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## APPENDIX A – FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL (IN DUTCH)

**Data focusgroepen:** 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 22, 25 januari

**Aantal respondenten:** 35 (streven naar 5 per groep)

**Benodigheden:** Videocamera, Audioapparatuur, Statief, Fototoestel, Magneetbord, 4 teksten, Draaiboek, Knutselmateriaal (papier, pennen, stiften, woorden die ze zelf kunnen pakken), Flyers andere verenigingen (bibliotheek)

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### **Aanwijzingen focusgroepen:**

1. Volgorde onderwerpen aanhouden
  2. Bij onduidelijkheid/onvolledigheid doorvragen
  3. Doel van focusgroepen: inzicht verkrijgen over de mening van tweens met betrekking tot de tekst op een flyer
  4. Er worden video- en audio opnames gemaakt
  5. Maximale duur is 60 minuten (maximaal aantal minuten is een richtlijn en staat achter elk onderdeel)
- 

Datum:

Tijdstip:

### **Opname apparatuur inschakelen**

---

#### **1. Algemene inleiding ( 5 minuten)**

- Welkom
- Introductie: uitleg over procedure
  - Duurt drie kwartier tot een uur
  - Je mag alles zeggen wat je denkt, maar laat anderen eerst uitspreken
  - Er zijn geen foute antwoorden
  - Als je vragen hebt mag je ze meteen stellen
  - Er worden video opnames gemaakt
- Doel van het onderzoek (we willen graag een nieuwe flyer gaan maken, maar hebben jullie mening daarvoor nodig)
- Voorstelrondje
  - Zelf een naamkaartje maken
  - Naam, leeftijd, hobby's, hoe lang ben je al lid
- Weten jullie wat een flyer is?
- Hebben jullie al vragen/opmerkingen?

## 2. Flyer en overtuiging (5 minuten)

- Hebben jullie eerder flyers gezien?
- Lees je wel eens de tekst op een flyer?
- Welke tekst van deze flyers vindt je leuk/wil je het eerste lezen?
- Zijn jullie door een leuke flyer wel eens lid geworden van een vereniging (bijvoorbeeld sport of muziekschool)?
- Als je ergens graag bij wilt, kies je daar dan zelf voor of luisteren jullie ook naar je ouders/vriendjes/klasgenootjes?

## 3. Ontwerpen van een flyer (10 minuten)

- Stel je eens voor: jij bent de baas van CJV en je moet een flyer maken die ervoor zorgt dat heel veel nieuwe kinderen op club komen. Wat voor een tekst zou jij er dan op willen zetten? Je mag helemaal zelf iets verzinnen, of je mag de woorden die ik op tafel heb neergelegd gebruiken om een mooie tekst te maken.
- Probeer woorden/zinnen te gebruiken waarvan jij vindt dat jou en elk ander kind zouden overhalen om op club te komen.

## 4. Bespreken van eigen flyer en die van anderen (10 minuten)

- Vertel eens één voor één waarom jij hebt gekozen voor deze woorden/zinnen?
- Wat vinden jullie van de andere flyers?
- Als je nog geen lid was van club, welke flyer zou er dan voor zorgen dat je lid wordt?

## 5. Bespreken van flyers gemaakt door onderzoeker (10 minuten)

- Ik ben thuis ook even bezig geweest en heb 4 verschillende flyers gemaakt met 4 verschillende teksten.
- Wat vinden jullie van deze teksten?
- Welke flyer vindt je het leukste? En welke flyer vinden jullie het minst leuk?
- Zouden jullie ze op volgorde kunnen hangen van Niet Cool (onderaan) tot Cool (bovenaan)?
- Vind je dat er nog iets mist op de brochure?

## 6. Afsluiting sessie (5 minuten)

- Denk je dat er nog belangrijke dingen zijn die op een flyer moeten komen te staan die wij vandaag niet hebben besproken?
- Heb je verder nog vragen?
- Ik wil jullie graag bedanken en daarom krijgen jullie een klein cadeautje van mij.

## APPENDIX B – RESEARCH MATERIAL (IN DUTCH)

### **Statistisch sociaal:**

Het is heel gezellig bij CJV. Het laatste jaar zijn er daarom al 99 nieuwe kindeern lid geworden! Al deze kinderen hebben nieuwe vrienden gemaakt, dus dat betekent dat in 2012 zeker 99 nieuwe vriendschappen zijn ontstaan. Negenennegentig kinderen zijn er een heleboel, word jij het 100<sup>e</sup> lid?

### **Statistisch individueel:**

Al 100 kinderen hebben doordat ze bij CJV zijn gekomen, geleerd waar ze heel goed in zijn. Deze 100 kinderen hebben door CJV ontdekt dat ze bijvoorbeeld heel goed zijn in samenwerken of dat ze heel creatief zijn. Waar ben jij goed in? Kom eens lang sop club en ontdekt het!

### **Anekdotisch sociaal:**

Jesse/Marieke (10 jaar) is al drie jaar bij CJV: “Ik kwam op club, omdat al mijn vrienden ook op club zaten en op school er elke keer leuke dingen over zeiden. Ik werd nieuwsgierig en ben er ook naartoe gegaan. Nu kan ik met ze mee0kletsen over wat we hebben gedaan! Bijna iedereen die ik ken zit er bij, dus dat is heel gezellig!”

### **Anekdotisch individueel:**

Jesse/Marieke (10 jaar) is al drie jaar lid van CJV: “Sinds ik op club ben gekomen heb ik allerlei leuke dingen geleerd, bijvoorbeeld hoe je spelletjes op een andere manier kunt spelen en welke grappige dingen je allemaal kunt knutselen. Zo heb ik ontdekt dat ik heel creatief ben. Ik vind het leuk om steeds iets nieuws te verzinnen om te maken.

## APPENDIX C – CODEBOOK CONTENT ANALYSIS

Main category	Subcategory	Description	Coder activity	Code
<b>A. Experiences</b>	Non-social citations	Indicate if the child provides a positive appreciation about CJV. This can be determined as “Het is er leuk”, or “Club is cool”, or “Je kunt er lachen”	Indicate if the child provides non-social citations 0- No 1- Yes	1
	Social citations	Indicate if the child writes something about the sociability or being together at CJV. This can be determined as “Het is er gezellig” or “Je bent samen”, “Samen dingen doen”	Indicate if the child provides social citations 0- No 1- Yes	2
<b>B. Attempts to persuade</b>	Persuasion	Indicate if the child uses persuasion in their flyer. This can be determined as “Kom op club” or “je moet er op komen”	Indicate if the child uses attempts to persuade 0- No 1- Yes	3
<b>C. Activities</b>	Activities	Indicate if the child writes something about activities	Indicate if the child says something about activities in general	
		1. General: This can be determined as “We doen leuke dingen” or “Op club doe je spelletjes”	0- No 1- Yes	4
		2. Weekly activity: This can be determined as “We doen verstopppertje” or “Op club doe je voetbal”	Indicate if the child writes something about weekly activities 0- No 1- Yes	5
		3. Yearly activity: This can be determined as “In de zomervakantie ga je op kamp” or “We gaan elk jaar op kamp”	Indicate if the child mentions yearly activity 0- No 1- Yes	6
<b>D. Information</b>	Clubhouse	Indicate if the child writes something about the clubhouse. This can be determined as “Er is een nieuw clubhuis” or “Mooi clubhuis”	Indicate if the child mentioned something about the clubhouse 0- No 1- Yes	7
	Leadership	Indicate if the child writes something about the leaders. This can be determined as “De	Indicate if the child writes something about the leaders 0- No	8

		leiding is lief" or "We hebben grappige leiding"	1- Yes	
	Costs	Indicate if the child mentions something about the costs. This can be determined as "De kosten van de club zijn...".	Indicate if the child writes something about the costs 0- No 1- Yes	9
	Mentioning organizational content	Indicate if the child gives information about organization content. This can be determined as presenting/mentioning the clubs/names or more organization things like "Je zit in een groep bij dezelfde leeftijd" or "Club is voor jongens en meisjes"	Indicate if the child mentions organizational content 0- No 1- Yes	10
	Information about camp	Indicate if the child gives information about summercamp (the activities, games etc)	Indicate if the child writes something about summercamp in general 0- No 1- Yes	11
<b>E. Members</b>	Friends	Indicate if the child writes something in the context of friends		
	Friends from school	School: Child knows friends or children from school.	Indicate if the child writes something about friends from school 0- No 1- Yes	12
	Making friends	Making friends: Child shows that you can make friends at CJV	Indicate if the child writes something about making friends 0- No 1- Yes	13
	Having friends	Having friends: Child writes something about being around friends, playing with friends	Indicate if the child writes something about having friends 0- No 1- Yes	14
	Girls positive	Indicate if the child writes something about the girls on the club  1. Positive: The child is positive about the girls at CJV. This can be determined as: "De meisjes zijn aardig"	Indicate if the child writes something positive about the girls: 0- No 1- Yes	15

Girls negative	2. Negative: The child is negative about the girls at CJV. This can be determined as: "De meisjes zijn irritant/stom"	Indicate if the child writes something negative about the girls: 0- No 1- Yes	16
Boys positive	Indicate if the child writes something about the boys on the club 1. Positive: The child is positive about the boys at CJV. This can be determined as: "De jongens zijn aardig"	Indicate if the child writes something positive about the boys: 0- No 1- Yes	17
Boys negative	2. Negative: The child is negative about the boys at CJV. This can be determined as: "De jongens zijn irritant/stom"	Indicate if the child writes something negative about the boys: 0- No 1- Yes	18
<b>Additional</b>	Additional	Codes that cannot be coded into any category	19



## APPENDIX D – CODEBOOK FOCUS GROUP

N-code	Code	Label	Citations
1	Ik kan niets anders bedenken/weet ik niet	Onbekend	6
2	Het is gewoon zo	Vaststelling	11
3	Dit kwam als eerste in mij op	Gevoel	4
4	Anderen kinderen vinden dit leuk om te lezen	Gevoel	2
5	Het is/Club is leuk / klinkt leuk / is goed	Positieve ervaring	3
6	Je kunt er vrienden maken	Positieve ervaring	1
7	Ik wil informatie geven over hoe en wat	Kennisgeving	2
8	Die flyer heeft meer informatie	Informatie	2
9	Ik vind mijn eigen het leukst	Zelfwaardering	15
10	Deze flyer heeft de meeste tekst	Woordenaantal	1
11	Deze flyer maakt kinderen nieuwsgierig	Interesse wekken	2
12	Het maakt mij niet uit	Geen mening	2
13	Ziet er goed uit/klinkt leuk	Aantrekkelijkheid	1
14	Ik vind het leuk om te lezen dat je iets kunt leren	Individualisme positief	8
15	Ik vind het stom als er staat dat je iets kunt leren	Individualisme negatief	4
16	Het is leuk om te lezen als er staat dat je nieuwe vrienden kan maken	Socialisme positief	3
17	Het is stom als er staat dat andere vrienden er ook op zitten	Socialisme negatief	18
18	Ik vind het leuk dat het over zoveel kinderen gaat	Statistisch positief	27
19	Ik vind het verhaal van J/M niet/minder leuk	Anecdotisch negatief	15
20	Ik vind het verhaal van J/M niet leuk want het gaat maar over 1 iemand	Anecdotisch negatief	3
21	Ik vind het verhaal van J/M leuk (er)	Anecdotisch positief	6
22	Ik vind de tekst niet te lang	Lengte positief	2
23	Ik vind de vraag die er instaat leuk/een vraag maakt nieuwsgierig	Vraagstelling	4
24	Ik vind het leuker als er foto's opstaan	Beeld	12
25	Ik vind het leuker als het meer versierd wordt (met tekening o.i.d.)	Versiering	4
26	Ik vind de inhoud van de tekst al leuk/mooi/goed	Inhoud tekst	2

27	Er moet meer informatie op de flyer over tijden/kosten/leeftijden etc.	Informatie	6
28	Er moet een persoonlijke afsluiting op de flyer staan	Persoonlijk	1
29	Er moet meer humor op de flyer komen	Humor	1

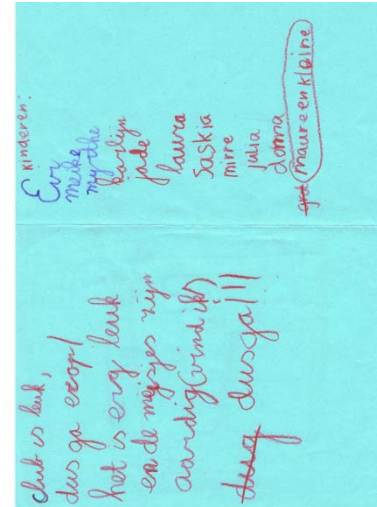
## APPENDIX E – CORPUS



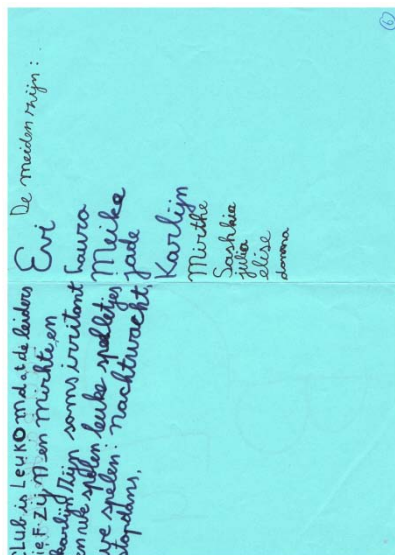
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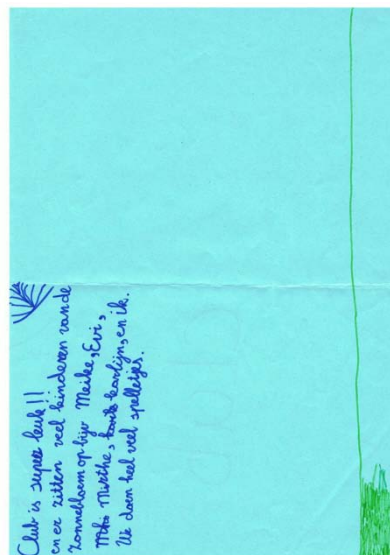
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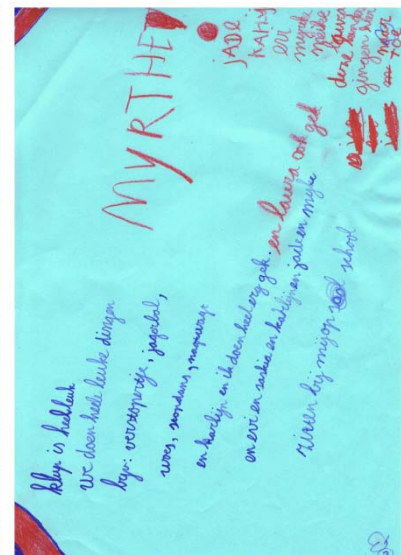
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1.4

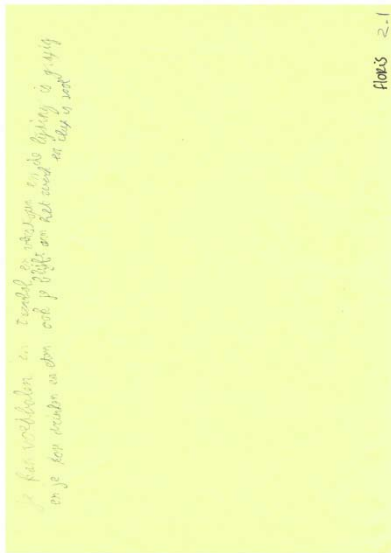


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1.6

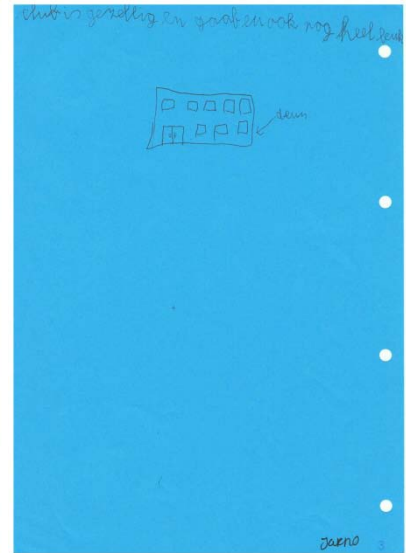
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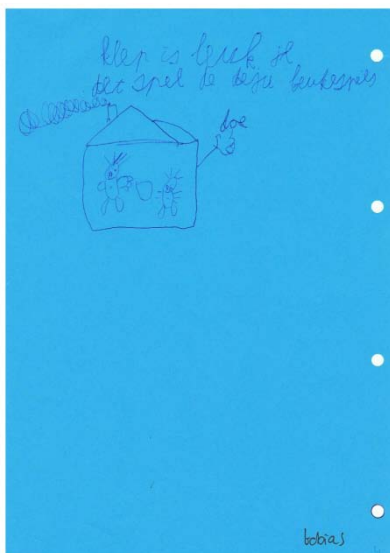
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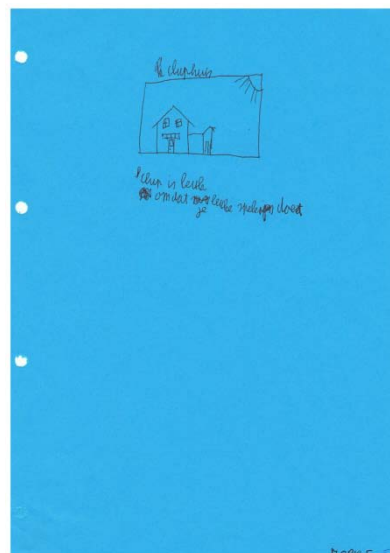
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2.3

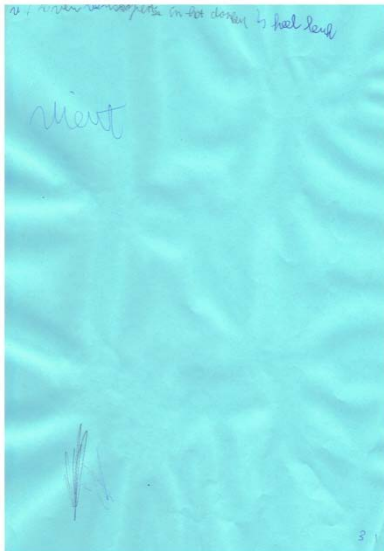


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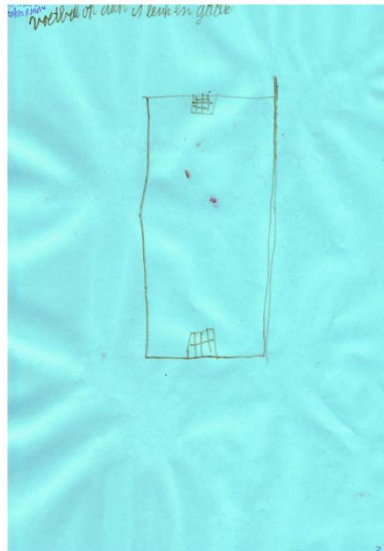


2.5

Sometimes you'd better ask the tweens.



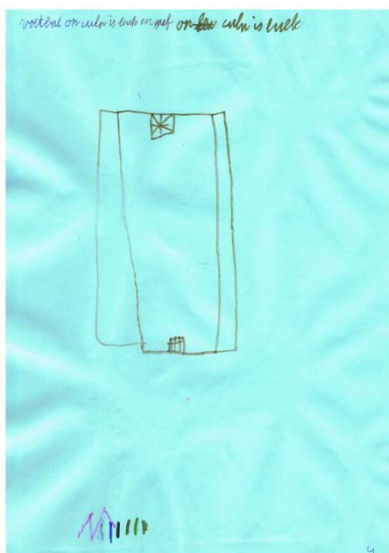
3.1



3.2



3.3

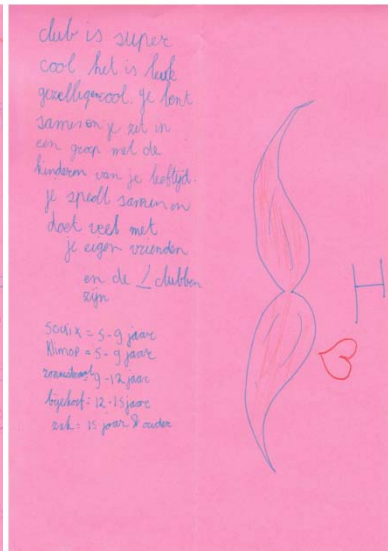


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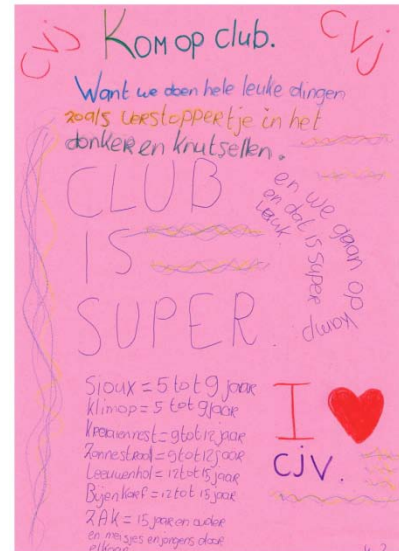




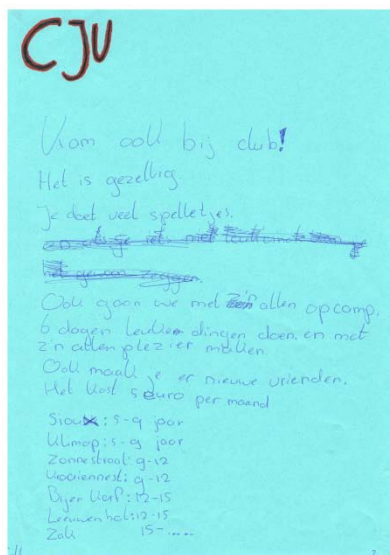
4.1 outside



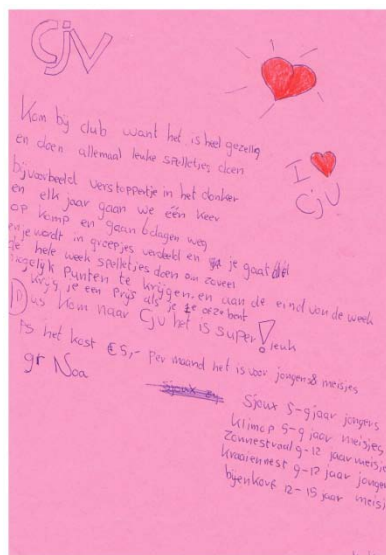
4.1 inside



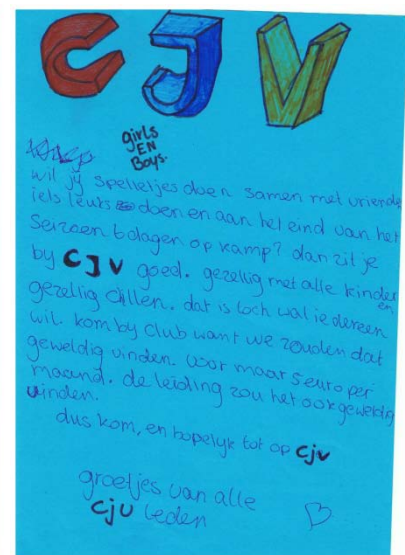
4.2



4.3



4.4



4.5

Sometimes you'd better ask the tweens.



5.1



5.2



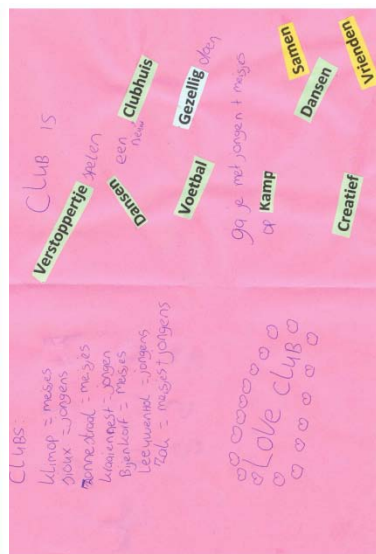
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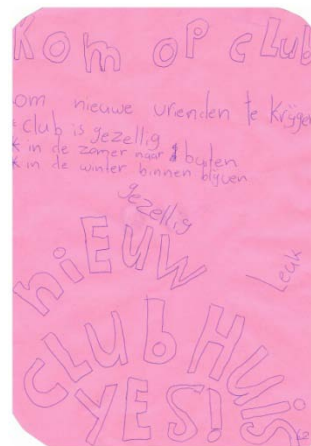
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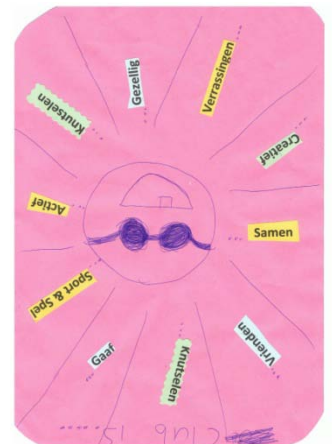
6.1 outside



6.1 inside



6.2 front



6.2 back

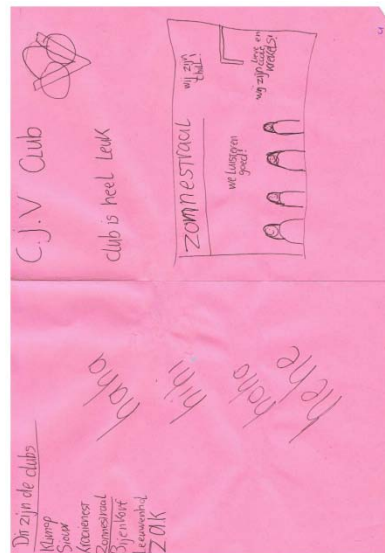


6.3 front

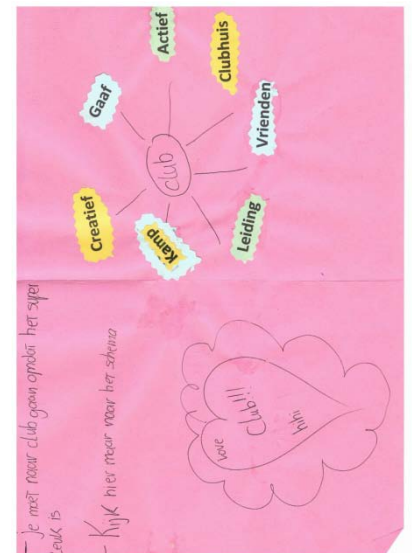
Sometimes you'd better ask the tweens.



[6.3 back](#)



## 6.4 outside



## 6.4 inside



6.5