# Chapter 7 Consumer Self-Concept in Food and Drink

## **Multiple Choice Questions**

1. Which theorist described self-concept as ‘the individual’s belief about himself or herself, including the person’s attributes and who and what the self-is’?
2. Lewis (1990)
3. Grubb and Grathwohl (1967)
4. Baumeister (1999)
5. Levy (1959)
6. What does negative self-incongruity relate to?
7. Positive self-image belief and positive product image
8. Negative self-image belief and negative product image.
9. Negative self-image and positive product image.
10. Positive self-belief and negative product image.
11. What is the first act conducted by an individual when purchasing an item is?
12. Search
13. Evaluation of Alternatives
14. A Purchase
15. Recognising needs
16. Which of the following does NOT define self-esteem?
17. How we personally rate information about ourselves
18. The positive evaluation of your self-concept
19. A key component of how we think of ourselves
20. An understanding of what others think of you
21. Which theory proposed that the more a brand image matches an individual’s self-concept the more that brand will be preferred?
22. Self-esteem
23. Self-congruity theory
24. Symbolic self-completion theory
25. Multiple selves’ theory
26. What does extended-self refer to?
27. The total of all that a consumer can call his e.g. his clothes, his house, his wife, his friends, his lands, his bank account and his reputation.
28. How an individual would like to see him/herself
29. How an individual feels others see him/herself
30. Ideal Social Self: How an individual would like others to see him/herself

**Revision questions**

1. Describe social comparison and explain how businesses use it to deal with self-concept?
2. Describe and explain the self-concept congruity theory?
3. Describe the actual, ideal, social self and ideal social self-concepts and explain the effect that they have on consumer behaviour in food and drink.
4. The symbolic self-completion theory is one of the theories that is related to self-concept. Where does this theory originate from? Explain its relevance in the context of food and drink.
5. How does self-esteem change consumer’s food and drink consumption habits?

**Answers**

### Multiple choice questions

1. C
2. B
3. D
4. D
5. B
6. A

### Revision questions

1. *Describe social comparison and explain how businesses use it to deal with self-concept?*

Social comparison theory explains how individuals evaluate their own opinions and abilities by comparing themselves to others. The theory assumes that that there is a drive within individuals to gain accurate self-evaluations. According to Wright (2006) {*Consumer Behaviour*. Thomson Learning, London} self-concept refers to the thoughts, beliefs and concerns that individuals hold about their own attributes and characteristics and how they evaluate these qualities with regard to their own personalities. It is important for businesses to understand self-concept to determine ways to appeal to consumers to purchase their products. One method used by businesses to deal with self-concept is linked to social comparisons - where businesses use people such as celebrities on adverts, with the goal to influence customers. When consumers see famous or attractive people on adverts, they are motivated to like the brand and its products. A consumer might have an idea self-concept which they hope to achieve and when they see an attractive or famous person advertising a product, they can feel persuaded to buy it with the hope of being like them. They buy the product with the aim of realising their ideal self-concept.

This is particularly common in the food and drink industry especially when a company is advertising a healthy product, because many people will have an ideal self-concept to be healthier. When they see an attractive and healthy person consuming the products they can believe they should be like them if they consumed the same products. Marketers provide idealized images of happy people using the products and this can create the sense that a person may become happier and confident if they use the product. For example, a person might consume Quorn beef because Mo Farah does, and they think this will make them healthier like him.

1. *Describe and explain the self-concept congruity theory? (Max 300 words)*

The self-concept congruity theory is based around self-image belief; this is for the reason that certain things in the world can make your self-image belief feel negative or positive. The congruity theory suggests that products have a massive influence on self-image belief. It states that a product can make an individual feel ‘high status’ or it can go the other way and make someone feel worse about themselves. For example, if an individual purchases an expensive suit, they are more likely going to feel good about themselves or a ‘high status person’. Rather than if they bought a cheap suit which didn’t fit nicely, they are going to feel run down and not happy with their purchase.

1. *Describe the actual, ideal, social self and ideal social self-concepts and explain the effect that they have on consumer behaviour in food and drink.*

Actual self-image refers to the person we actually are and how we view ourselves based on our thoughts and decisions we make. The ideal self-image is how we aspire to act. This ideal image can be devised through morals that we have learnt from parents or other role models, observing how others act. Our ideal self is changing constantly as we grow and learn the type of person we aspire to become. Social self-image refers to the way we believe we are viewed by others and Ideal social self-image is how we aspire to be viewed by others. All four of the above components impact consumer behaviour. Our actual self-image will determine the goods and services we decide to buy/use as it is how we view our true self to be. For example, if an individual viewed themselves to be a vegetarian they may purchase milk and cheese when doing their weekly shop. However if they wish, aspire or are trying to become a vegan they may opt out of purchasing dairy products and instead purchase foods only suitable for vegans. In this example, this is the individuals ideal self-image (to become vegan) is impacting their behaviour when purchasing products. Social self-image and Ideal self-image also impact consumer behaviour.

Consumers may purchase a certain product solely for the reason to attempt to change what they believe others opinions of them are to opinions that individual wants others to have of them, which is their ‘ideal self-image’. Consumers use products or services to reach both their ideal and social ideal self.

1. *The symbolic self-completion theory is one of the theories related to self-concept. Where does this theory originate from? Explain its relevance in the context of food and drink.*

The symbolic self-completion theory originates from the symbolic interactions school of thought. The key concepts of the theory that affect the consumption of food and drink include:

Self-deﬁnitional symbols – these symbols are the objects that people use to communicate their self deﬁnitions to others within society. Symbols can be material and non-material, and include anything ranging from behaviours and socially recognised markers such as an individuals’ social status or material possessions. This can relate to food and drink as individual’s behaviour can be different to a number of certain foods and drinks.

Self-deﬁnitional threats – an individual’s self deﬁnition can change for the purpose of self-esteem maintenance and protection. This self deﬁnition is likely to change when there is change in the relative performance and the psychological closeness and distance of others.

1. *How does self-esteem change consumer’s food and drink consumption habits?*

Self-esteem can have a large impact on the person’s conﬁdence. Self-esteem refers to the positively of an individual’s self-concept. In regards to food and drink, the amount of self-esteem a consumer has, will have an impact on the food they purchase. This is because people with low self-esteem lack conﬁdence and may feel bad about their consumption habits. For example, someone who has recently had a personal relationship breakdown may have low self-esteem and therefore they may comfort eat. This therefore means that self-esteem has a big impact on the amount and type of food consumed. In addition, people with low self-esteem are also known to have low self-control which means they may consume more food and drink. On the ﬂip side people with high levels of self-esteem are more likely to spend more money on food and drink because they believe they are worth it.