

Institutionen för kost- och idrottsvetenskap

# Vem och vad kan man lita på?

Ungdomars förhållningssätt till budskap  
om mat och ätande utifrån ett  
forskarinitierat rollspel.

av

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AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

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## Abstract

Title: Who and what can you trust? – Adolescents' approach towards food messages from a researcher-initiated role-play

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In everyday life, adolescents are exposed to multiple messages about food. There is an abundance of information to process and handle, which can lead to confusion and anxiety. The overall aim with this thesis was to develop, analyse and problematize researcher-initiated role-play combined with a subsequent focus group interview resembling food contexts in adolescents' everyday life, and through participation in the role-play identify the adolescents' approach to and negotiation about messages concerning food and eating.

The empirical data built on role-playing and focus group interviews with 42 adolescents; boys (14) and girls (28), 15 to 17 years old. The findings revealed that role-playing in combination with subsequent focus group interviews is a suitable research method to study adolescents' reflexivity regarding food and eating, as it promoted participation and reflections amongst the adolescents. Participation and reflection are crucial elements in Swedish schools, and therefore this method could serve as a pedagogical tool in Home and consumer studies.

The results also show that the adolescents were reflexive concerning who to trust when it comes to food messages, bodily risks with food ingested, and food as an identity marker. The adolescents perceived agents who had knowledge or education concerning food and nutrition to be trustworthy. Agents with whom they had a close relationship with and felt a genuine care from were also considered as trustworthy. On the other hand, messages conveyed with a commercial interest were less trusted by the adolescents.

In addition, this thesis shows that food is much more than nutrients for adolescents; it is also a tool by which to express identity.