

Ethical Challenges in the Development and Commercialization of Food

Bárbara Hellen Matos Kochinski, Joice Monegato Siqueira, Nicolle Duarte, Sergio Vinicius Dias
(School of Engineering of Piracicaba - EEP, Brazil)

Abstract: The objectives to be pointed out in this article are focused on the use of ethics in marketing strategies in food products as an influence on consumption, especially in children and young people, since they are more socially and financially unprepared, and also easy to persuade.

Key words: product development; marketing; ethics; consumption

JEL codes: Z

1. Introduction

The ethics applied to the food sector face, under certain circumstances, certain challenges, since in the midst of capitalism whose profit is seen as a higher priority than the quality of the product itself, there is a disagreement with consumers, in relation to their health as well as their psychological and social issues.

2. Literature Review

2.1 External Influences Over the Young Public

In the article “Marketing applied to the food industry” of Scagliusi, Machado and Torres (2005), they affirm that children and young people are highly influenced to choose products whose propaganda was appealing by colors, actions, references with characters, films and other psychological and cultural issues, that is, alienating them to the desire for consumption. This was evidenced by the study by Borzekowski and Robinson (2001) analyzed by the aforementioned authors (Scagliusi & Machado Torres, 2005), where 46 children between two and six years were incited to watch a cartoon, in which part of the group watched advertisements and the other did not. At the end of the experiment, it is noted that when presenting different objects to be chosen by the children, a good part that watched the advertisements chose the products previously announced, while the other party did not suffer outside influence to make the decision.

In a conference of this, research was conducted by IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) in 2004, which shown that Brazil is responsible for the largest number of children watching television, and consequently consume abusive propaganda for toys and fast-food

Bárbara Hellen Matos Kochinski, Dr., School of Engineering of Piracicaba; research areas: business strategy; operations and sustainability management; organizational studies; analysis and information technology. E-mail: babi_hmk@hotmail.com.

Joice Monegato Siqueira, Dr., School of Engineering of Piracicaba; research areas: business strategy; operations and sustainability management; organizational studies; analysis and information technology. E-mail: joice.monegato@outlook.com.

Sergio Vinicius Dias, Dr., School of Engineering of Piracicaba; research areas: business strategy; operations and sustainability management; organizational studies; analysis and information technology. E-mail: sviniciusdias@gmail.com.

2.2 Guidelines Provided to Regulate Child Consumption by Television Commercials

Brazilian children watch about 4 hours and 50 minutes per day of television, since the measures proposed by Alana Institute to regulate this type of content during child programming were only introduced in countries such as United States, Germany, Argentina, France, England, among others. This non-regulation of advertisements in Brazil, for example, of food, causes certain physical, social and psychological consequences not only in children but also in young people and adults. Because of this, there were detected in 2018 about 10 conclusive cases against abusive advertisements, such as the case of Mc Donald's in 2013, which was reported by the Child and Consumption Program of the Alana Institute for performing shows of the brand character in schools creating an affective bond with the brand, which resulted in a fine of R\$6 million for the company (Child and Consumption, 2018). Despite the number of complaints, there are institutions in Brazil that aim to minimize both the amount and the content of advertisements, in order to prevent the misleading and/or abusive announcement causing embarrassment to the consumer, such as the CONAR (National Council of Advertising Self-Regulation), as well as ANVISA (National Agency for Sanitary Surveillance), which regulates the unrealistic nutrition labels present in the packaging. According to Figure 1, Brazilian children influence 80% of the purchase decisions of a family. Cars, clothes, food, home appliances, almost everything indoors has behind the hunch of a child, except decisions related to insurance plans, fuel and cleaning products that have little influence from the children.

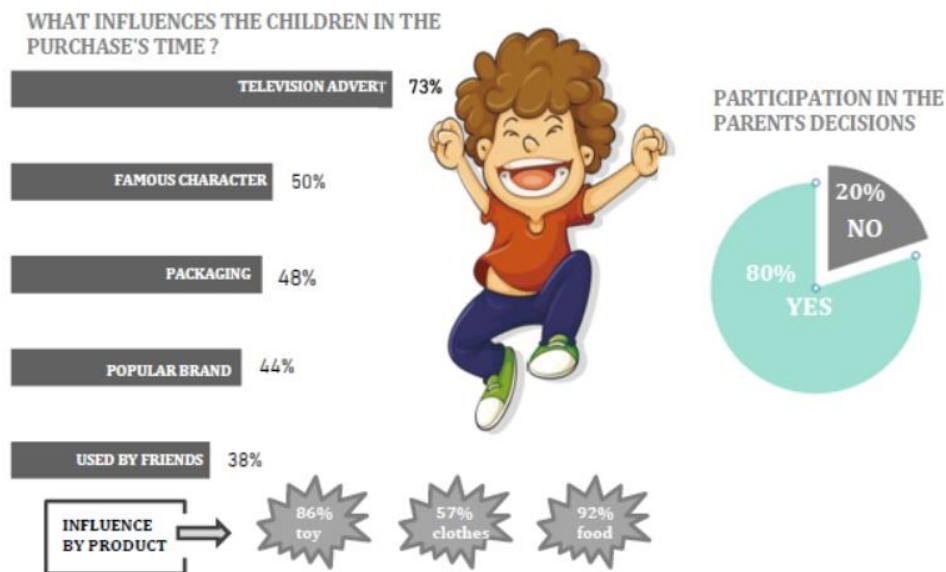


Figure 1 Influence of Child Consumption

Source: Instituto Alana/TNT Interscience (2003) adapted by O Tempo (s.d)

2.3 Results and Review

Based on the statistical studies conducted by Anvisa between 2009 and 2013, about 49% of the young and adult population is overweight and 14% is obese. In addition, 80% of the food advertisements directed to children are highly caloric, with high amounts of sugar and fat but with poor micronutrient content, as a result of this, 35% of the children are overweight and 16% with obesity. According to Figure 2, we can observe the increase in obesity in adults from 2006.

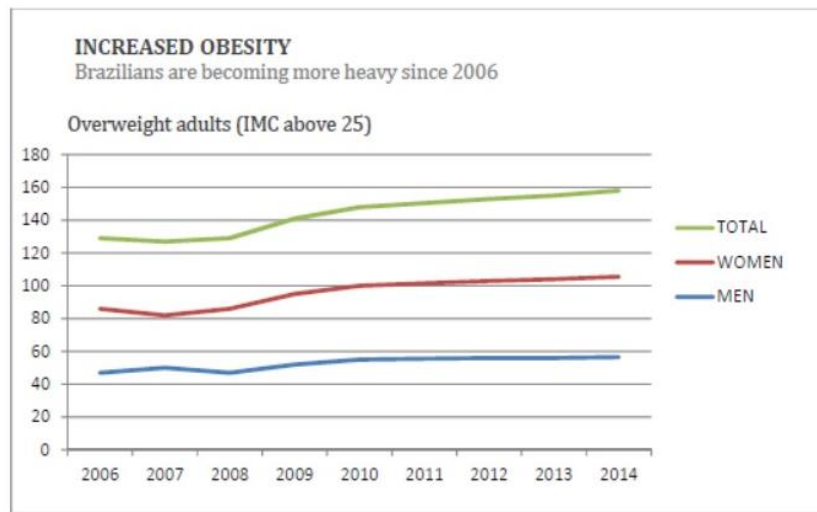


Figure 2 Increased Obesity

Source: ANVISA, 2015. Adapted by Formiga, 2015

3. Conclusion

Because of what was mentioned, it should be considered that several ethical challenges by companies are faced in both the development and commercialization of food products. There are several initiatives of institutes and associations to try to combat marketing misused by companies. However, the supervisory bodies still do not have enough strength to put into practice their projects, also because of the high pressure of industry associations and advertising. Some companies claim that the rules hurt their freedom of expression. However, the lack of insight into the impact on society can affect the company's performance in the long run and its relationship with society.

References

- Criança E Consumo (2015). "Tempo de Crianças e Adolescentes Assistindo TV Aumenta em 10 Anos. Outubro", available online at: <http://criancaeconsumo.org.br/noticias/tempodiario-de-criancas-e-adolescentes-em-frente-a-tv-aumenta-em10-anos/>.
- Criança E Consumo (2018). "McDonalds leva multa de R\$ 6 milhões por publicidade infantil abusiva. Outubro", available online at: <http://criancaeconsumo.org.br/noticias/justicamulta-Mcdonalds>.
- Ferreira R. M., Nascimento N. A. and Aguiar A. J. (2009). "A transição nutricional e a população infantojuvenil: medidas de proteção contra o marketing de alimentos e bebidas prejudiciais à saúde", *Nutrire: rev. Soc. Bras. Alim. Nutr. = J. Brazilian Soc. Food Nutr.*, Vol. 34, No. 3, pp. 217-229.
- Formiga I. (2015). "Excesso de peso atinge 52.5% dos brasileiros, segundo pesquisa Vigitel", Programa Bem-Estar, available online at: <http://g1.globo.com/bemestar/noticia/2015/04/excesso-de-pesoatinge-525-dos-brasileiros-segundo-pesquisa-vigitel.html>.
- Scagliusi F. B., Machado F. M. S. and Torres E. A. F. S. (2005). "Marketing aplicado à indústria de alimentos", *Nutrire: Revista da Sociedade Brasileira de Alimentação*, Vol. 31, pp. 79-95.