



The Food Industry And The Manipulation Of The Masses Through Advertising

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ABSTRACT

The food industry emerged in the 17th century, after the Industrial Revolution, and gained strength with globalization and the rise of capitalism in the 1990s. This was due to the new shape of society, which went from being primarily agrarian and pastoral, with a lifestyle that followed the patterns of nature, to almost completely urban, with a modified and much more accelerated notion of time. The growing charge for productivity, at first in factory jobs, and now in large companies, has caused adaptations in people's lives, and thus eating habits have also changed, becoming more practical and, consequently, less conscious. Alienation, lack of free time, and stress form the

perfect scenario for the food industry to sell its products, even though they are harmful to the consumers' health. Advertising has become the main driver of industrialized products, selling a distorted image that manipulates the buyers' choice. Neuromarketing strategies, chromatic scales, slogans, music, and packaging with images of famous characters and artists divert the attention from the controversial ingredients, making the person not know what he or she is consuming. The use of substances with high addictive power, such as sugar, fat, sodium and chemical additives create dependency in the body, leading the consumer to always seek that food, in larger quantities and more often. All this causes the food industry to create its own consumer market, in a cycle that is only possible to escape with awareness, food education, and especially a critical sense, so that the population can choose what to eat freely and consciously, knowing the impacts of their decisions.

Keywords: Food Industry, Manipulation, Advertising.

1 INTRODUCTION

The relationship between man and food is something natural and instinctive, which began with the prehistoric hunts, through the development of agriculture, until the creation of the food industry today. (FRAGA, MARQUES, 2016). This relationship has always been marked by changes, ranging from food for the need for survival to the development of food trade, which moved the economy for long periods, such as maritime expeditions in the sixteenth century, and that brought with it cultural exchange, improvements in technologies related to logistics, in addition to structuring an entire society in all its aspects. (ASSAD, ALMEIDA, 2004)

However, with the Industrial Revolution, from the seventeenth century, and later with the advent of globalization in the 1990s, coupled with advances in food production technology, there was a change never before seen in human history: the industrialization of food. (FRANÇA, et.al., 2012). At first, this new technology was seen as revolutionary, something that would finally put an end to hunger in the world, because production increased exponentially, in line with population growth. With the encouragement of

governments and the approval of experts, the food industry was born, being a promise of welfare for the population and profit for capitalists.

What was not expected, however, were the problems this would bring. The indiscriminate use of chemical additives and dangerous ingredients, such as flavor enhancers, the overuse of salt, sugar and fats, artificial colors and flavorings and all kinds of preservatives and stabilizers, brought with them a series of physical diseases and endocrine disorders, now widely fought by the medical community. (WHO, 2016), (OLIVEIRA, et.al. 2011)

In addition, the mental, psychological and emotional health of the population has also been compromised, since these hyperpalatable foods create dependence, in the same way that illicit drugs do (LIMA, 2014). Added to this, are also the context in which the foods were inserted and the association people make with them, linking the good taste to momentary pleasure and happiness.(SAWAYA, FILGUEIRAS, 2013)

All these factors contribute to the creation of a mass of consumers who often do not know what they are buying. And being aware of this The media, through its advertisements, is the entity that makes up this whole context and feeds it back. Using colorful and attractive packaging, emphasizing only what is convenient for them, advertising induces the consumer to maintain their eating habits, giving continuity to the industrialized food market. (MACHADO, 2006)

The tricks used by the food industry are as shrewd as possible. The induction of a thought in which there is no questioning about what is consumed, the lack of information about the origin of raw materials used, and the makeup applied to something extremely harmful, giving it a beautiful and safe aspect, are some of them. But, the most important is the method by which the market itself is created, attacking the most defenseless: the children (PONTES, 2009). If the industry has children as the main consumers, the chances that they will continue consuming in adulthood is very high, (WHO, 2016) creating a cycle in which the person is trapped, without knowing how to get out, or even without knowing that they are in it.

In view of such a serious and present problem in today's society, this paper aims to explain, using literature review, such as articles, books and primers, about how advertising, at the behest of the food industry, can induce and manipulate consumers to buy products that harm them, taking away their critical sense and right to choose. (MACHADO, 2006).

2 THEORETICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE PROBLEMATIZATION

2.1 THE FOOD INDUSTRY

The industrialization of food started with the Industrial Revolution, in the 17th century, after the development of factories and the transformation of society from rural to urban. This change in lifestyle, which used to be calm and followed the rhythm and time of nature, became more agitated, and the hours

started to be counted by the hands of a clock, and the day, lengthened by electric lights. The need to meet production and sales standards and goals took away from the workers the time that was dedicated to other activities, among them the cultivation of their own food. The term "lack of time" comes to exist in the collective unconscious, and at this moment, the tasks that are considered superfluous or that demand a lot of time are no longer considered superfluous.(FRANÇA, et.al., 2012), (AQUINO, C., MARTINS, J., 2007), (LEONARDO, 2009).

It is in this context that the food industry emerges, supplying new needs by offering packaged food ready for consumption. Even going through various changes and evolutions, the concept of processed foods is the same: to sell convenience, something to be consumed and quickly discarded. However, this speed has reached a point where the food spends so little time in the consumer's hand that he does not realize what he is consuming, being something dangerous in the sense of causing alienation and misinformation. (DAMO, et.al., 2015)

This system begins to collapse when, with globalization and rapid dissemination of information, from the 90s, the increasing cases of poisoning by chemical additives begin to gain prominence, as well as the development of chronic noncommunicable diseases, NCDs, by exacerbated consumption of sodium, sugar of all kinds and fats, especially hydrogenated, also called *trans* (WHO, 2016), (SAWAYA, FILGUEIRAS, 2013), (MIRANDA, 2005). Even with health entities, such as the World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health itself, giving guidelines on proper nutrition, the fast pace makes a life completely free of these products inaccessible, which creates and maintains the consumption cycle. All this facilitates the exchange of healthy foods for processed foods, in addition to the influence of advertising, which induces and directs the population's choice, shapes habits, and transforms the food culture. (GreeMe, accessed on 05/21/2019)

2.2 IMPACTS OF FOOD ON HEALTH

a. Healthy Food

The basis of a balanced diet should contain all food groups and be suitable for each person individually. The consumption of vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, eggs and low-fat dairy products are the most common indications from experts, in addition to the consumption of plenty of water. (BRASIL, 2014) The priority given to fresh or minimally processed foods, rather than the excess of processed and ultra-processed foods is due to the fact that these are fresher and more natural, therefore, richer in nutrients, such as vitamins and minerals, carbohydrates, amino acids, fatty acids, among others, ECYCLE (2019), favoring the proper functioning of the body and the prevention of diseases.



Figure 1, Food Traffic Light. Source: www.inutrischool.com.br

b. Processed Foods

When a food undergoes a major change in its shape, color, flavor, texture, etc., it is configured as a processed food. This goes from homemade recipes, such as pasta and all kinds of dishes, to fully synthetic products, such as candies and soft drinks (BARCELOS, et.al., 2014). Given this, nutrition experts recommend the conscious and moderate use of processed foods, since any modification leads to a decrease in the properties of that food, and the extremely restricted use or, if possible, the complete elimination of ultra-processed foods from the diet, because these products are considered nutritionally empty, i.e., they do not add nutritional value, only calories. (FRANÇA, et.al., 2012)

The group of ultra-processed foods are the true villains of health today, because they contain high rates of sodium, sugars, fats, including hydrogenated fats, and chemical additives, all with the function of adding a hyper-palatable flavor that causes addiction levels as high as those of drugs, (SAWAYA, FILGUEIRAS, 2013) in order to create addiction to maintain the cycle of purchase and consumption.

c. Addictive Ingredients

i. Sugars

Besides all the harmful effects of sugar on the body's health, such as diabetes, obesity, dental caries, etc., studies indicate that refined sugar produces the same type of brain stimulation as cocaine and other drugs (CARRETTA, 2006), (SAWAYA, FILGUEIRAS, 2013). This highlights the power that this ingredient has to create physiological addiction and emotional dependence.

The food industry uses it on a large scale in almost all its products, because it has the power to increase the flavor of food, making it tastier as possible. This indiscriminate use of sugar has generated worldwide commotion about its implications for the physical health and mental integrity of consumers. (MOSS, 2015)

ii. Sodium

Used both as a flavor enhancer and as a preservative, salt, in excess, can cause high blood pressure and other cardiovascular problems, kidney problems, edema, among others.(SOUZA, et.al., 2016) The industry uses it even in sweet foods, to highlight the flavor and increase shelf life, but to the detriment of the health of its consumers.

iii. Fats

Fats are necessary to our organism and exercise several functions, however, their excess can cause atherosclerosis, obesity, cardiovascular and hormonal problems, etc., having the ability to increase palatability and maintaining proper texture and consistency, the industry uses it widely, especially in its hydrogenated form, made in a laboratory and extremely harmful, since it is not recognized as food. (SBC, 2013)

iv. Chemical additives

Used on a large scale for the most diverse functions, such as in coloring and flavoring, in stabilizers, preservatives and flavor enhancers, chemical additives can cause allergies, hyperactivity, liver and kidney problems, and worsen the cases of obesity and diseases arising from it. (JUNQUEIRA, et.al., 2011), (VOLTERA, et.al, 2008)

2.3 MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

In 264 BC Romans painted walls to announce their gladiatorial fights, but there are older records dating back to 3000 BC with the Phoenicians painting figures to show their wares on rocks, always on busy routes to attract the public. More than five thousand years later, in 2019, advertising has evolved with the help of more sophisticated resources and in-depth studies about the consumer, how his critical sense works when it comes to choosing and buying.

Marketing makes use of a crucial tool when it comes to persuading the consumer in the act of buying: the psychology of colors - it consists of the study and combination of colors to attract customers. It works as follows: Warm colors reflect passion, enthusiasm, energy and happiness, while cool colors give a sense of calm and professionalism. This happens because the human brain has the so-called mirror neurons that can be activated both by visual and sound stimuli, by implicit deduction of the continuity of an action, communicative facial actions and observation of speech (LAMEIRA et al, 2006).

According to Gallese (2005) and Rizzolatti et. al., (2006) (apud LAMEIRA et al, 2006), these neurons are associated with several modalities of human behavior: imitation, theory of mind, learning new skills and reading the intention in other humans. According to Lindstrom (2009, p. 61) "this concept of imitation is an important factor in our motivation to buy what we buy. However this desire is also linked to dopamine, a neurotransmitter. Dopamine is a chemical messenger synthesized by certain cells and

promotes, among other effects, the feeling of pleasure and motivation (MANDAL, 2013), released during sex, physical activities, and anything else you enjoy doing.

When the consumer chooses what to take home, he takes into consideration several factors such as: psychological, which represent personal characteristics such as the favorite color; they may also be socio-cultural characteristics such as the influence of the place and culture where they live, for example, a Brazilian buying a soccer ball will give preference to "traditional soccer" instead of a rugby ball or an American soccer ball. However, currently 93% of people observe visual aspects when buying, and of these, 84.7% believe that color is more important than other aspects when buying a product. Two out of three consumers only take home the product if it is in their favorite color. These choices are mostly unconscious, people do not realize that this happens when they see a fast-moving consumer product advertisement. food highlighted in red - Among the characteristics of warm colors is that they open up the appetite.

Neuroscience is responsible for studying psychic behavioral aspects, and together, marketing has been working to understand the consumer.

Nothing happens by chance, for example, during the breaks of Sunday soccer games, they only show advertisements of scantily clad women advertising beer brands; or when it's Saturday morning, during the children's programs, they show toy advertisements, and even on weekdays, during the break of the afternoon soap opera, they show perfumes and/or household products. This happens because the industry is increasingly creating its target audience. That's right, big brands have invested even more in media channels for the dissemination at specific times of their products, and their main target is children. On the market shelves, sweets, snacks, and even the noodles with the image of Monica's gang are placed close to the floor, all to attract the children's audience.

3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS

This work was carried out by the qualitative research method, based on bibliographic reviews. The main sources of research were scientific articles, primers and books on the subject, directly or indirectly; specific sources to clarify important external points for the construction of understanding, more comprehensive to prove the facts presented. The conclusions were drawn after reading and studying several sources, old and recent, and mainly, after many conversations, reflections, and observation of reality in general and also personally.

4 RESULTS

When making a deeper analysis about the mechanisms of action of the food industry, it is evident that advertising has a direct effect on people's critical sense and decision, since it uses artifices such as the choice of colors when developing a package or a logo, distributing advertisements in videos at times that are targeted to the target audience, such as beer advertisements during breaks in soccer games, or commercials for sugary foods during children's programs.

In view of this fact, it is analyzed that the food industry is able to modify eating habits, as well as the entire culture embedded in them, through marketing strategies and using ingredients that generate addictions, such as refined sugar and fat. Together, they create a mass that can be manipulated, who do not understand that they are inside a market cycle, or if they do, they are not able to get out of it.

5 CONCLUSION

Therefore, it is evident the importance of awareness about the mechanisms of action of the food industry, especially about how the advertising of industrialized products is able to shape the consumer's choice, as well as the entire eating habit of a society and, consequently, its culture. The development of a critical sense is essential to put an end to the market cycle created by the industry itself, and enable everyone to choose consciously, ensuring good health for the body and freedom for the mind.

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