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Anxieties in modern society related to food and advertising.

An exploratory study of the Danonino brand in a cross-cultural perspective.

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Abstract

Industrialisation of foods, the obesity pandemic and inadequate information available about food highlight the risks in modern food products. This explorative and qualitative paper creates a theoretical framework for understanding anxiety, food and advertising in the promotion of children's products and to explore how anxieties relating to children and food are dealt with in advertisements aimed at global markets. The analysis is based on a collection of 175 advertisements for the Danonino brand between 2001 and 2007 broadcast in six European countries. Results show that anxieties are at play in various ways in the «mother-child» relationship with regard to food, and that anxiety is enacted differently according to specific cultural backgrounds.

1. Introduction

The idea for this analysis originated in a study undertaken in connection with the Danonino brand (Gram et al, forthcoming) which made it possible to determine how healthy eating in products for children is articulated and staged differently across cultures. The authors observed that a set of themes related to anxiety crossed the whole corpus which they felt deserved further investigation. This paper thus seeks to propose a theoretical framework adapted to these problems to provide an exploratory analysis rising from the application of this framework to the Danonino sample. The analysis is based on a corpus of 175 advertisements of the Danonino brand from six European markets (France, Spain, Germany, Russia, Poland, Denmark) broadcast between 2001 and 2007. We will analyse how one large food producer addresses the various anxieties inherent in each society in connection with children and food, and how Danone deals with anxiety in their advertising discourses in each

country. We will thus seek to untangle the complex issues which inter-connect the concepts of anxiety, health, education, pleasure and entertainment in the advertisements aimed at promoting the same brand of foodstuffs for children. In this paper the authors will not discuss the actual health value of the Danonino products, but merely analyse how the products have been promoted in various European countries with regard to anxiety and responsibility for childcare.

2. Anxieties in modern society related to food and advertising

2.1. Anxieties in modern society

Furthering the conclusions drawn by George Balandier on uncertainty and the permanent movement towards modernity (Balandier, 1988), Ulrich Beck's work made it possible to draw attention to the permanent risks we are confronted to in the market economy (Beck, 1992). With regard to this permanent concern about what Giddens has called the "basic safety systems" (Giddens, 1987), individuals are faced with uncertainty and doubt (Bauman, 1995), which also significantly increases the responsibility for the latter in their own risk management. The reflexivity which results from this is found at the individual level as well as for society as a whole, summoned to even wonder about the consequences of its own development. As a corollary to this report, a number of our practices and actions from now on are subject to an individual evaluation of the risks they represent. They then also become potential sources of anxiety. Giddens detailed the mechanisms which allow his so called "abstract systems" to maintain confidence in the expert systems which are founded on science and technology, and the layman in the modern world which limits their direct connection. For this reason, he insists on the "symbolic systems pledges" which must provide the first ones. In spite of these processes, confidence in the abstract systems associated with the modernisation is called into question by the layman. This scepticism is increased by the diffusion of contradictory information due to scientific results¹, encouraging the evident perception of the risk and removing credibility from the scientific messages (Diasio & al., 2007: 9-10). Apparently irrational practices then appear, based on an alternative rationale to that of technical and scientific analysis to take responsibility for the risks in modern society. The historian in economic activity, Roland Marchand, (1986), showed how in the United States,

¹ Referring to the many scandals of public health having touched food, medicine or pharmaceutical industry these last years (crazy cow, aviar influenza, OGM, contaminated blood, the vaccine against hepatitis B, hormonal treatment of substitution of the menopause women, etc.).

the advanced techniques of marketing gradually took into account the concerns and the anxieties of the ordinary consumers. The specialists in the advertising communication were the first to openly assert the 'therapeutic' dimension of their work, supposed to demonstrate that the company aims to solve some of the psychological discomfort - or lower the level of anxiety – that the consumer might feel in his purchase activities, that is caused by a set of industrial changes which are complex and difficult to understand for an ordinary citizen. In this context, Kline questions the institutions which need to take on the responsibility for the education of young children in a consumer society: "if children, in particular those under twelve, do not have sufficient knowledge or cognitive capacities to make informed choices on the market, then which institution should have the responsibility to protect them: the industrialists, the governments, the teachers or the parents? " (Kline, 2005: 294).

2.1. Food in modern society

Food in modern societies constitutes a particularly representative field of these anxieties (Green & al., 2003). The growing industrialisation of foods, the rising cost of agricultural raw materials, the obesity pandemic, the inadequate information available to today's eaters (incomprehensible labelling, gaps in controls, inappropriate standards, misleading and/or ambiguous quality stamps, unverifiable claims...) underline the risks in modern food products: "Industrialised food products give rise to questions which can rapidly become anxieties. Where do they come from? What transformation have they undergone? Who has handled them?", (Poulain, 2002: 39). Confronted by these multiple risks, the media regards children as the group most vulnerable to convenience foods and to the persuasive techniques that accompany them, which results in a detailed need for their protection. At the European level, recent modifications made to the directive "television without frontiers" are proof of this: Council Directive 2006/952/CE of 20 December 2006 on the protection of minors and human dignity, and on the right of reply in connection with the competitiveness of European industries in the audio-visual services and on-line information [Official Journal L 378 of the 27.12.2006] which insists on the need to "ensure consumer protection and the protection of minors". Kneafsey & al. (2004: 4) summarise the reasons why food is a relevant illustration of this risk in society : 1) contemporary risks are hidden in daily products, no matter how salubrious, 2) they result from the very application of technological and scientific procedures to industrial foods, 3) these risks are not necessarily immediately perceived, which in turn makes it necessary to carry out a scientific analysis, 4) these risks are omnipresent, and can

affect a much wider area than previous geographical areas and over various temporal periods, and 5) the management of these risks necessitates a complex balance between the various categories of risk and benefit.

The sociologist, Claude Fischler, widely contributed to diffusing the concept of the omnivore paradox, hoping that the latter, favoured by the diversity of his diet, is obliged to arbitrate with the risks associated with the absorption of new foods, leading to neophobic food behaviours (Fischler, 1988: 11-12). For the human, this risk management constitutes the result of a wide range of physiological influences but more especially cultural (Ibid.: 13). Numerous authors go as far as supporting the theory that a "magic thought" means that we become what we eat (Fischler, 1988 ; Bergadaà & Urien, 2006 ; Diasio & al., 2007). Food thus constitutes an identity support strongly contributing to the feeling of "ontological safety" about which Giddens speaks.

The anxieties we evoked with Jean-Pierre Poulain's quote in the introduction to this section then take a particular importance. A team of researchers thus highlighted how modern societies have tried to keep eaters informed about the food they eat by substituting the direct connection between producers and consumers with the illustration, often according to the scientific model, of the producers work (Kneafsey & al., 2004). However, they highlight that this substitution has failed to prevent the development of anxieties, particularly due to the health scandals that we have touched on, even though the vague messages from the health authorities (Corbeau, 2008) on foods do not allow individuals to build their own eating competences or to consider themselves competent eaters. On this point the survey suggests that the topic of anxiety emerges in the answers spontaneously given by consumers, even without the researchers needing to point it out.

The OCNI (Not Identified Eatable Object) which Fischler speaks of thus raises an extremely distressing question for individuals: if we become what we eat, then who are we when we eat foods we don't know? And in the case of our subject, how will we know what our child will become? In a context where bodies appear less and less lived like "given" but appear as being "reflexively mobilized" (Giddens, 1987), the responsibility of parents in this future becomes extremely worrying... Parents find themselves confronted by uncertainty around what must be the best food products to feed their young children. Moreover the individuals questioned by Kneafsey and his team raised the subject of anxieties associated with food, without the researchers approaching it, and they naturally linked their anguish with regard to food to that

of malnourishment for their children, and this as early as pregnancy (Kneafsey et al., 2004: 10).

2.2. Enacting anxieties in food advertising

This omnipresent risk and the anxieties which result from it are then in turn regurgitated in media messages, whose production constraints lead to retain the subjects which are likely to increase the TV ratings in the design of their media products (the television news of course, but also documentaries, reports or investigatory programmes). It is already well documented how the media select an array of subjects that are enacted as important or worrying (Mc Combs, Shaw, 1972). Current research on "media panics" suggests a distressing treatment of information (Milligen, 2006 ; Mc Robbie, 1994 ; Critcher, 2003). These distressed messages are found in advertising, which has everything to gain in poaching the public. This assumption is all the more consolidated since the actors in this professional sector prove to be strongly influenced by the postmodern or hypermodern theories, depicting a society deprived of institutions guaranteeing perennality and stability of meaning (Lyotard, 1979) or introducing individuals to all the distressing excesses of a social, economic, political, environmental or health deregulation (Lipovetsky, Charles, 2004). The studies relating to the presence and the effects of distressing messages in advertisements are numerous (Arthur, Quester, 2004 ; Burnett, wilkes, 1980 ; Cochrane, Quester, 2005 ; Kay, 1972 ; La Tour, 2006; Spence, 1972 ; Van Muching, 1998).

Advertising can be recognised as one of what Giddens has called "access points", that an institution will use to provide the pledge of confidence. To this point, Beck as Giddens attribute a great potential to influence. Lash highlights the varied access to reflexive resources of modern society which leads to define "winners" and "losers" (Lash, 1994). According to Kline, the over-estimation of the role of the expert systems and the withdrawal of public authorities thus constitute two limits to the positive vision of a reflexive modern society. The idea of an "informed choice" by the consumer would in his view rely on the myth of complete and relevant information, and on a market economy based on loyalty and precise appraisal (Kline, 2005: 293). Ultimately, "the case of child obesity demonstrates the failure of a over-optimistic vision of reflexivity and liberalism which guarantees on the one hand, greater freedom of commercial communication for industrialists, and, on the other hand, a total freedom of choice for young consumers." (Diasio & al., 2007: 30). These theories are moderated by Alan Warde who judiciously points out the perennality of the influence of

habits on the one hand, but also on the other of the social institutions and the membership groups in which most interactions develop which allow the exchange of information, advice, or delegation of purchases (Warde, 1994). However, it remains that researchers highlighted at which point a reading of advertising messages by risk sociologies made it possible to clarify their role in the social construction of the resulting representations of risk and anxiety (Diasio & al., 2007). First of all, they show at which point the advertising message progresses to a "hyper-ritualisation" whilst strongly contributing to standard expressions, attitudes or behaviours: "Thus the advertising executives make our conventions conventional, stylise what is already a stylisation, they make frivolous use of what is already beyond contextual controls" (Goffman, 1979: 84). This is why stereotypes and conventions multiply: "based on the eternal return game and already desired, on the use of socially recognisable emblems, the general advertising message (and in particular the televised message) must deal with an element that is recognisable and which, once recognised, produces a world of already established associations, such as a 'character'" (Eco, 1968: 256). Thus, advertising "contributes to reinforcing or, in any case, to orientating the symbols and the values it uses" (Diasio & al., 2007: 22).

Within these symbols and values, the risks occupy a particular place. Following the example of other media communications, the advertising message indeed seeks to attract and maintain the attention of the consumers, what Patrick Charaudeau calls a "visée de captation". Exploiting the language of seduction, its main objective is to draw on emotions. This is distinguished from a "visée d'information", which is more factual and based on the value of authenticity (Charaudeau, 1997). With regard to the impact of emotion, rhetoric teaches us that *pathos* constitutes a means of carrying the will, sometimes even beyond conviction, by employing a semiotic language which exceeds the rational dimension. Patrick Charaudeau thus raises the "topic of anxiety" relating to the media message and which covers all the informational categories (Charaudeau, 2000). This topic of anxiety would receive greater attention from the public, better memorisation of the message and a greater chance to cause a change in their behaviour. A possible strategy thus consists of positioning the risks and their associated anxieties in society in order to attract its targets. The illustration of the risks to which consumers are exposed then relates to a rhetorical enactment navigating between practical certainty and explanatory certainty² to encourage the consumption of the product or

² With the use of experts, testimonials, people the consumers can identify with and use of data from statistical studies or common beliefs.

the service. The theory of cognitive dissonance makes it possible to understand finally how individuals, if they prove to be sensitive to the risks presented, will probably seek to cure the discomfort experience due to the potential realisation of the threat.

However, many studies raise the issue of the difficulty for the companies of dealing with these anxieties in their communications strategies. The individuals distressed by the lack of knowledge which they have of the industrial processes thus manage from there to seek alternatives to the manufactured goods (Kneafsey & al., 2004). Studies show in addition that, if the anguish of the young mother places her in a state of engagement which will support her efforts to change behaviors when she considers the risks mentioned in a publicity are representative of her problems. Whereas the effects of dealing with anxieties immediately become very negative for the brand as soon as the least manipulative inclination is suggested (Cote & al, 2005 ; LaBarge, Godek, 2006).

In spite of these risks, the field of maternity and childcare constitute levers regularly used by the advertising executives (among others Prothero 2006). The anxiety developed by the mothers is then exploited so that they adopt the products proposed as protections to the new risks which they perceive for their child. The logic raised by Erving Goffman is then illustrated in Douglas and Meredith's report : "the risks and the problems that a minority - often a small minority - of infants and children must face is enacted in a universalized way, becoming potential risks for each infant and each child" (Douglas, Meredith, 2004, pp. 300-301). Prothero insists on the exaggeration of these fears and anxieties, often largely far away from the real risks, and which contributed to build a universe of standards and representations making difficult the exercise of the mother role for women in Western modern societies. Prothero clarifies two large axes through which the speeches about anxiety develop: fear of hurting the child and fear of not fulfilling the mother role. These two axes will enable us to connect this work to those resulting from the first research that we have carried on the Danonino brand.

2.3. Culturally anchored perceptions of anxiety in relation to food and advertising

For long it has been well documented that advertising styles and content vary across cultures, especially when it comes to products entangled in social relations such as food (Roth, 1995, de Mooij, 2005, Fischler & Masson, 2008). The fact that anxieties and perceptions of risk differ within European countries has been documented in a recent European study about trust

in food (Kjærnes et al, 2007). When what consumers fear differs from market to market and how they prefer to be addressed are linked to local traditions the use of anxiety in advertising poses challenges that call for in-depth market insight. This paper explores how the Danonino brand has responded to these challenges.

Anxiety has grown in society where there is a declining trust in scientific solutions, and this anxiety is used in advertising. Food is an especially important locus of anxiety as it is strongly connected to identity and symbolics as in the old saying “you are what you eat”. But anxiety grows when consumers due to alienation and industrialisation of food production cannot any longer identify what they eat or who has handled their food. The anxiety is all the more present when children are concerned.

3. Methodology centred on ‘tensive rhetorics’

In our first study, we have identified some discursive registers employed to promote Danonino and documented that they were differentiated according to the cultural zone in which advertisements had been broadcast. The first group gathers “Utility commercials” as they promote the product on a substantive basis and stress objective health benefits. Message content is focused on health and values of wellbeing excluding references to pleasure or entertainment. The commercial is targeted at mothers and does not include any animated character or brand character. The second group, so called “Adventure commercials”, enacts various playful activities like discovery, ventures, search for feeling and risk-taking. The product is a magical mediator that gives access to this playfulness in a fictitious and fairy world. The speech is addressed to children through animated characters and brand characters. The “Entertaining commercials” use the special offers, gifts or playing sets included in the products or offered through the packaging. The playing activity relates to arts and crafts, enabling the expression of individual artistic skills or fostering social relationships among peers. The addressees of the speech are the children. The product – which is not linked to health verbatim - opens a fictitious playground but as a mere entertainment, not as an adventure. The fourth group comprises the “Activity commercials”. These advertisements in which play is synonymous with physical activity and sport, enact joy, excitement as well as a sense of competition...without establishing a direct relation between successful play and food. The speech is addressed to the mother and does not employ animated characters or

brand characters. Health is approached there by a presentation of the essential properties of the product. The enactment of anxiety is mainly found in categories 1 “Utility” and 4 “Activity”.

However, as we underlined in the introduction, this first analysis showed that, beyond these four main categories, several sets of themes concerned with the topic of anxieties emerged across the corpus. Those topics illustrate what Patrick Hetzel has called the ‘tensive rhetoric’ as far as brand communication is concerned (Hetzel, 2002: 267-268). A ‘tensive rhetoric’ dialectically associates two terms that appear at first sight as a paradoxical injunction (Watzlawick, 1984) but with the purpose in the end to appease the provoked tension and offer a way of solving such a paradoxical injunction. These ‘tensive rhetorics’ are set up around a whole set of themes which, although treated differently according to national cultural backgrounds, appear to constitute cross-cultural axes on which a systematic analysis can be carried out ³:

- anxieties dealing with children’s good physical health and normal growth enacts a tension between parents’ knowledge about food products and a questioning about the long-term effects of food intake on children’s growth.
- the mothers charged diaries leading them to be less present than the representation of the good mother would require ends in a tension between the social and professional requirements in Western modern societies and the responsibilities the maternal bond entails (such as being present to protect the child)
- the mothers’ aspiration to be loved by their children generates a tension between the desire to maintain pacified relations and the unavoidable conflicts associated with the responsibility of educating children
- the room needed to negotiate different kinds of food intake reveals a tension between the values parents want to inculcate to their children and the need to take into account children’s own desires and opinions

³ What indeed confirms our theoretical framework since the quoted authors come to similar conclusions on the anxieties caused by the modern societies, whatever the countries where they carry out their analyses.

- the fear that children might be excluded from their peer group, illustrates the tension between the reproduction of a cultural system within family circles and the system of values prevailing within the peer group
- The fear of the intellectual failure generates a tension caused by the difficult evaluation of the role that is playing food in cognitive development

In this first explorative study, the commercials have been analysed using a qualitative approach aimed at tracing - through verbal and visual rhetoric - an extensive array of themes related to anxiety. This first qualitative and exploratory study will lead onto the elaboration of an analytical grid allowing a more systematic quantitative analysis that is planned as a second research step.

4. Anxiety and responsibility for child health and development in the Danonino sample

Anxiety and responsibility for child health and development are very clearly present in the Danonino campaign. However, as predicted in the above theoretical section, this happens in differing ways in the different countries taken into account in the study. The only exception of a strong presence of anxiety and responsibility for the child is the Danish commercials in the sample. In the 1990s, a campaign against Danone's little yoghurts was launched in Denmark by dentists and other health specialists critical of how much sugar the little yoghurts contained. For this reason Danone's image has not been considered good in the eyes of the adult population in Denmark which is probably why commercials have not been targeted directly at adults. The Danish commercials are almost exclusively directed at the children through a cartoon or adventure universe, by showing extracts of children's movies from which they get stickers or tattoos along with other gifts, when purchasing the product. The themes in ads directed at children are fun and fantasy stories, and the theme addressed is about being strong and growing and thereby being able to fight a dragon, a witch, an ice bear or the like. One could argue that implicitly this indicates an anxiety in children about not to grow or not to be strong enough to be able to manage on their own.

In all other national samples anxiety and responsibility are addressed explicitly but in varying forms and are addressed by varying actors.

In all commercials (except the Danish, where no adults appear) the mother is clearly foregrounded in several cases as the main responsible for the child's health in the

commercials. She is used in testimonials to storytell how she used to be worried and how she now feels safe with the new products. The commercials are the most instrumental in the Russian, Polish and French commercials, where daily or frequent intake of the product – directly or indirectly – is recommended in the commercial to secure adequate nutrition.

A tangible fear of bad nutrition or e.g. bone fracture because of lack of calcium and vitamin D is both verbalised and visualised in the Danonino campaign. Anxiety and fear is explicitly verbalised by doctors and dentists, particularly in the French, Polish and Spanish samples where a doctor e.g. as in an example in a French commercial through the help of a model of a human bone shows how fragile it is when the child has not been well feed with calcium and vitamin D. In some countries in the sample fear is used proactively showing either explicitly (the fragile model bone) or implicitly (a tower of bricks built by children in a playground collapsing in the background).

In the German commercials, there is a very strong emphasis on “Without crystal sugar” and the fact that there are “No additives” – this reflects a very strong German concern with organic production methods and a fear of industrial food (Synnott et al., 2007). Futhermore in the German sample the Danonino product is frequently shown in proximity of fresh fruit. This focus is not very strong in the French and Spanish commercials and totally missing in e.g. the Polish and Russian commercials, as these seem to be markets with a less accentuated fear of industrialised food production.

In the German sample on the contrary some commercials are staging a fear of the child cheating, not eating the healthy food stuffs – e.g. as shown in the Cats commercial where children give milk to the cat instead of drinking it and pushing away the fruit. There also seems to be a strong emphasis on the risk of having conflicts with the children when insisting on feeding them healthy food items which they do not like. This is a conflict that Danonino claims to be solving by arguing that they offer children a healthy food product that children like.

In the French and Polish commercials medical doctors and dentists along with research institutes (such as the Polish Mother and Child Institute) appear in the commercials. They are dressed in white coats symbolising expertise and authority and they signify knowledge about health and certitude about what to do to deal with fear and anxiety about the child’s health. They offer one coherent explanation about what to do e.g. one Danonino yoghurt a day which

is contrary to the perceived uncertainties and the general lack of control in society described in the theoretical section. The health experts are brought in to reassure the worried mother and create trust and confidence in the Danonino brand, relieving anxiety.

Teachers and childminders in Kindergartens are also used as experts, especially in the French, Spanish and Polish ads. No teachers appear in the German ads, where mothers or voice-overs are applied to explain about products, and as the only country in the study, German children are explaining the strengths of the products. Furthermore quality stamps are used in the German sample as a symbol of scientific research and authority.

The German commercials are in a much more positive story telling mode, never applying scary undertones. A number of German commercials have the theme of children without energy, with low bloodsugar, filmed in black and white, showing children struggling with their math assignments. The brand figure enters and suddenly the colours are back in the film and the children are feed Danonino yogurts and are then fit for homework.

One story takes the underlying fear which is very present in the German society for not performing well in school indirectly and presents a happy scenario of a boy who runs home showing his mother his top grade. Thus showing this happy situation the opposite is indirectly sketched as the negative (not achieving a good grade). Playful learning is thematised in several ads across the sample as the opposite of painful learning, which is a source of anxiety to parents.

Differing countries deal with differing problems and fears. The German society is – like the French – very competitive and in Germany children need to show in a young age that they have the potential for academic work if they shall have the opportunity to go to the prestigious Gymnasium, so the fear of the child not having energy for school, is real. In Russia it is a problem that children do not have access to basic nutrients and the fear reflected in the commercials seems not to be concerned with schooling at all but rather the fear of not getting the right nutrients to grow and develop as a healthy child.

A more abstract anxiety to protect children is thematised in a French commercial, “La patinoire” (2003), where the little yoghurts are named: “little pots of strong bones”. This commercial plays on the insecurity of parents. In this case, the plot is not about the concern for not knowing what is going on inside the child’s body, but rather for what might happen when the child is out of sight: “We cannot always follow [our children] but we do our best to

prepare them for when we cannot be there” (Voice-over). This can be interpreted as an attempt to take away guilt and fear from the parents, but to stress the obligation of taking responsibility. French parents do spend much time away from their children as opposed to German parents where the mother is typically not working.

The child’s fear of not growing is addressed in several German commercials, clearly directed at mothers rather than at children. In the commercials directed at children a style using cartoons or adventure films is used most often. In one German commercial where the child articulates his fear of not being big enough to play basket with the bigger children his mother patiently explains (while offering him a yogurt to eat), how he will have to be patient and reassures him that as long as he eats right he can be sure to grow.

As mentioned in the theoretical section a fear is linked to industrial foods and “if you are what you eat, what happens if you don’t know what you eat” (Fischler, 1988). As a response to what is in the little yoghurts and as a response to consumers anxiety of not feeding the child well enough, a small cartoon is inserted in several Danonino commercials across all markets (except the Danish cf. above) illustrating how well the constituents of the product respond to the child’s needs in a so-called “nutritain-ment” (nutrition and entertainment) strategy. Cartoon character workers with construction helmets and wheelbarrows help the body, depicted as a machine, to function, and the functionality of the elements of the Danonino product is shown: vitamins (showing metabolism, making the (body) machine work), proteins (showing growth of muscles) and calcium (illustrating construction of bones). In this way Danonino seeks to reassure (perhaps after having fanned the flames of anxiety just a little bit) the consumers that their children will be solid, as built by competent construction workers, if the children eat the product.

5. Conclusion

The analysis above thus indicates that anxiety and responsibility for children’s health, along with psychological and social development, are clearly enacted in food advertising. In Danone’s commercials for the Danonino brand this is done in different ways, using implicitly and explicitly a more positive or a more anxious tone, depending on the industrial, social, cultural, and institutional characteristics of the target market. We have documented how the Danonino brand global campaign takes into account cultural differences in advertising communication styles, in selecting the topics of anxiety and fear that are addressed, and when

mobilizing various authority figures to substantiate anxiety, to document product value, and to underline and relieve mothers' responsibility and anxiety. Whereas the Danish commercials avoid any direct link to adults' anxiety, the German commercials addresses anxiety for industrial food and insufficient nutrition indirectly and positively along with a strong focus on learning. French, Spanish, Polish and Russian commercials play more directly on fear and guilt, suggesting what might happen from a physiological, psychological and even from a cognitive standpoint, if the child is not well-fed.

Our study highlights that anxiety and fear are social constructs and what is defined as problems for children and thereby what to fear as far as their harmonious development is concerned, is deeply anchored in cultural contexts. This makes it difficult - if not impossible - to design a standardised communication strategy to anxieties and fears in relation to health and food, and Danone clearly draws on an insight in these differences in their campaigns for the Danonino brand.

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