

Ethical concerns  
arisen from  
mcdonalds and fast  
food marketing essay



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Ethical concerns are becoming dominant in fast food choices because of the healthy and obesity crisis among children. There are 3 ethical concerns: the first is fast food advertising putting a toy into a meal to sell to the children; the second is fast food advertising leads to an increase in healthy and obesity problems among teens and pre-teens; and the third is the fast food company has its own definition to determine standards (i. e., what is children's advertising).

Healthy campaigners reckon that not the fast food advertising putting toys in meals to encourage children eating junk food, but the advertising leads to an increase in childhood healthy and obesity problems. Young children just go off the impressions that they see. What they see in television advertising stimulate desire to eat fast food and get the toys. The correlations between fast food advertising and children's food preference might be strong. Eating high sugar and high fat food regularly obviously increase the healthy and obesity problems. For example, the chronic disease alliance declares on its website that " 26 per cent of youth between the age of 2 and 17 years old are overweight or obese." Canadian adults are in far worse shape. Roughly 23 per cent are obese, and another 36 per cent are overweight. Therefore, eaten fast food too regularly can put children's healthy at risk.

Each fast food company has its own definition on what advertising to children entailed and on what " better" food meant. For example, according to the New York Times article Tug of War in Food Marketing to Children, Kraft has decided its crackers have to have fewer than 100 calories and 290 milligrams of sodium in a serving, while ConAgra said its canned pasta had to have fewer than 350 calories and 750 milligrams of sodium. Under their

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definitions, the fast food advertising is following the development of ethical guideline and has some flexibility in setting standards that takes into account what kind of food will sell. In the contrast, consumers do not know what the exactly standards of fast food, present fast food companies might fend off government regulation and encourage unhealthy eating behavior. The news article After “ Super Size Me” - Emergent Regulation of “ Junk Food” Marketing, McDonald’s faces criticism for selling food that is high in fat and calories. As people become more aware of healthy lifestyle, McDonald’s begins promoting the idea of an active lifestyle to adults as well as children. Today the McDonald’s average Happy Meal lower in fat, salt and sugar than five years ago. Furthermore, McDonald’s and other fast food companies start posting the calories in their fare on their menu to ensure that advertising or marketing to children for food and/or beverages are met the nutritional criteria.

How much such practices be ethically justified? (What justification might McDonald’s or other fast food companies offer?) Does this justification pass the generalizability test?

Fast food companies are following a new menu-labeling law to post the calories and nutrition in their fare on their menus. For example, both the websites and menu boards (i. e., McDonald’s and KFC... etc) includes the nutrition content for the various meal options. The labeled menus may lead to significantly reduced calorie intake in fast food restaurant meals purchased for children. Proponents of menu labeling hope that knowing what is in their food may direct people to healthier items.

In general, the nutritional label use can affect purchasing because consumers want to avoid the over weighted problems and to lead to a healthy lifestyle. The effects of nutrition labeling can help consumers to know ingredients, calories, fat, and sugars in food product, so that consumers would understand to choose what kind of meals to balance their weight. However, there is another important question we should ask: Does every consumer use nutritional label when purchasing a meal? One important point needs to keep in mind that most of consumers choose to eat fast food very regular (i. e., 2-3 times a week). Fast food aims at “ fast”, consumers may not devote too much time to consider which food has lower calories. At first, consumers may interest in the menu-labeling and following the nutrition information to choose healthier meals. Later on, consumers may continue to choose their preferences but nutritionally poor foods. Therefore, it does not pass the generalizability test because not suit for everyone.

What market failures - if any - might the proposed regulatory policies (i. e., mandatory disclosure of calories content; prohibitions on child-focused advertising) address?

Obesity is a growing problem among the young children. Consequently, the mandatory disclosure of calories content has emerged as an important aspect of consumers' food choice decisions. The calories or nutrition labeling can address consumers' unhealthy eating behavior and obesity problem because consumers want to avoid the negative nutrients in food products. Consumers may use the information to make more healthful eating choices,

and this may result in better health outcomes such as a reduction in obesity crisis.

The calorie or nutrition labeling also encourage producers to re-produce their unhealthy food products. The labeling policy requires disclosure of nutritionally negative attributes such as calorie, fat and sugar content. Under such a mandatory disclosure rule, fast food companies selling food with high amounts of these negative nutrients may choose to re-produce to reduce the high calories. Through product re-production, labeling may not just those who read the label, but potentially benefit consumers who eat the food.

What are the potential downsides, both ethically and otherwise, of such regulations?

One important downside related to disclose the calorie or nutrition information is whether consumers would read the calorie or nutrition labels. Mandatory labeling could improve food products if producers re-product food to avoid making unfavorable disclosures, such as high fat or sodium content. This process would extend the benefits from nutrition labeling to consumers who do not actually use labels to make purchase decisions. If nutrition information that the consumer may not trust is available, nutrition labels could not function efficient and effective.

Furthermore, many consumers may not desire to have nutrition information, or may be consumers may believe that it is less important to consider the nutritional quality of food when eating. Consumers have to choose food to consume every day. If the consumers do not often eat the fast food, they do not consider the healthy problem of fast food is a serious crisis. If the <https://assignbuster.com/ethical-concerns-arisen-from-mcdonalds-and-fast-food-marketing-essay/>

consumers eat the fast food more regular, they may not insist on reading nutrition labeling and choosing healthier food every meal. Personal preferences or taste offers immediate choice decision.

To the extent that McDonald's wishes to lobby against or influence the shape of such regulation, what do you think would be the best level of inclusivity to pursue?

McDonald's in-store labeling can still feature a standard nutrition information label and create an icon and bar chart that provides information on a menu item's nutrition value and how it relates to daily nutrient guidelines. The icons show the most important elements that relevant to everyday's nutrition - calories, protein, fat, carbohydrates and sugar. The chart is showing the percentage of the government's recommended daily intakes. This nutrition labeling format is more attractable than words, and makes consumers easier to understand and to read the nutrition information.

Further, website is another good place to pursue the healthy eating habits. McDonald's website could be more specific to figure out the nutrition of different food or meals. Choose a McDonald's food (i. e., cheeseburger) to learn the item's nutrition facts, ingredients, food exchanges information. When consumers click the food button, it provides a nutrition analysis of the food item to help them understand the fat, sugar, and calories information and to assist consumers with meal planning for weight control.