

## A Comparative Analysis of Advertising Ethics of Food Retail Outlets with Special Reference to McDonald's and Burger King

Author:

**Mast. Harsh Shashank Thole**

Student

College- Ashoka Centre for Business and Computer Studies, Nashik.

Email Id: [harshshashankthole@gmail.com](mailto:harshshashankthole@gmail.com)

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### Abstract: -

Advertising ethics play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchase decisions, particularly in the competitive landscape of the fast-food industry. This research paper conducts a comprehensive comparative analysis of the advertising ethics employed by two prominent fast-food giants, McDonald's and Burger King, to shed light on their respective approaches to marketing food products. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative analysis involves content analysis of advertisements, promotional campaigns, and social media strategies of both McDonald's and Burger King. Additionally, quantitative research involves surveying consumers to gauge their perceptions of McDonald's and Burger King's advertising ethics. The survey explores the impact of advertising ethics on consumer trust, loyalty, and willingness to make purchase decisions. Preliminary findings suggest that while both McDonald's and Burger King employ persuasive and sometimes controversial advertising tactics, they differ in their approach to ethics. McDonald's tends to prioritize health-conscious messaging and transparency in its advertisements, which resonates positively with health-conscious consumers. In contrast, Burger King often employs humor and shock value in its advertising, which can polarize consumer perceptions. This research contributes to the broader discourse on advertising ethics and consumer behavior within the fast-food industry.

### Keywords: -

Advertising Ethics, Consumer Behavior, Content Analysis, Fast Food, Health Consciousness, Social Responsibility.

## **Introduction: -**

Advertising is a ubiquitous and influential force in the contemporary consumer landscape, shaping perceptions, preferences, and purchase decisions. In the highly competitive arena of the fast-food industry, advertising plays a pivotal role in attracting customers and fostering brand loyalty. However, the ethical dimensions of advertising within this sector have come under increasing scrutiny as concerns about transparency, honesty, social responsibility, and health consciousness continue to gain prominence.

This research paper embarks on a comprehensive journey into the realm of advertising ethics, focusing on two of the world's most recognized and influential fast-food giants: McDonald's and Burger King. The advertising strategies employed by these industry titans offer a rich terrain for exploration and analysis. McDonalds and Burger King have consistently pushed the boundaries of creativity and controversy in their advertising campaigns, often with divergent approaches to ethics.

The ethical conduct of food retail outlets is of paramount importance in contemporary society. Consumers, now more than ever, demand transparency in advertising messages, accountability for social responsibility, and a heightened awareness of health-conscious choices. Understanding how McDonald's and Burger King navigate these ethical considerations in their advertising is not only relevant but also imperative.

This research endeavors to dissect and scrutinize the advertising ethics of McDonald's and Burger King through a multi-faceted lens. It employs a blend of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to unravel the intricacies of their advertising strategies. By examining the content and context of their advertisements, assessing the perceptions of their consumers, and considering the broader implications for the fast-food industry, this study aims to shed light on the ethical nuances that shape consumer behavior and influence the competitive landscape.

As we embark on this comparative journey into the advertising ethics of food retail outlets, it is crucial to recognize the broader significance of this research. The findings not only offer valuable insights for practitioners in the field but also contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding advertising ethics, consumer choices, and regulatory considerations within the fast-food industry.

## **Body: -**

### **Rules and Regulations to be followed for ethical advertising:**

Ethical food advertising is essential for ensuring that consumers receive accurate information about food products. Various rules and regulations are in place to govern food advertising and promote transparency, honesty, and fairness.

- **Truthfulness and Accuracy**
- **Clear and Transparent Labeling**
- **Avoiding Misrepresentation**

- **Comparative Advertising**
- **Health and Nutritional Claims**
- **Portion Sizes and Serving Suggestions**
- **Use of Testimonials and Endorsements**
- **Children's Advertising**
- **Ethical Sourcing and Production**
- **Regulatory Compliance**
- **Honest Food Photography**
- **Environmental Responsibility**
- **Avoiding Exploitative Practices**

Regulatory bodies like the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States play a significant role in overseeing and enforcing these guidelines. Violations of ethical food advertising standards can result in legal consequences, fines, and damage to a brand's reputation.

The regulatory body known as "Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018 [FSSAI], Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006, Customer Protection Act of 1986 works to ensure ethical advertising and food quality.

#### **Methods: -**

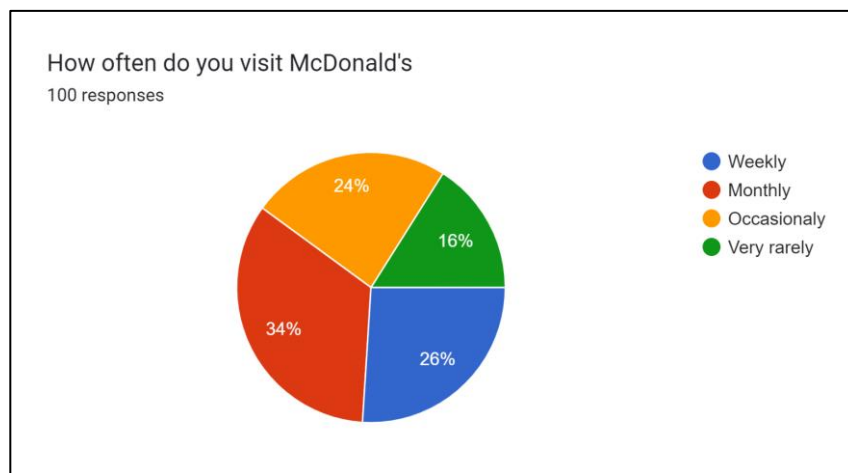
<b>Research Type</b>	Descriptive and Exploratory
<b>Data collection</b>	Primary data
<b>Universe of sampling</b>	Individuals visiting fast food outlets
<b>Sampling method</b>	Simple random sampling
<b>Sample size</b>	100
<b>Duration of research</b>	3 days
<b>Cryptography</b>	Pie Charts

## Data Analysis: -

### Question 1: Choose your age range?

**Output:** The age range 16-25 is the most represented among the responses, with 56% of participants falling in this category. The next largest group is in the 26-35 range, comprising 24% of the responses. Those aged 36-45 account for 14% of the responses, while individuals under 15 and those aged 45 and above are the least represented, with 5% and 1% respectively.

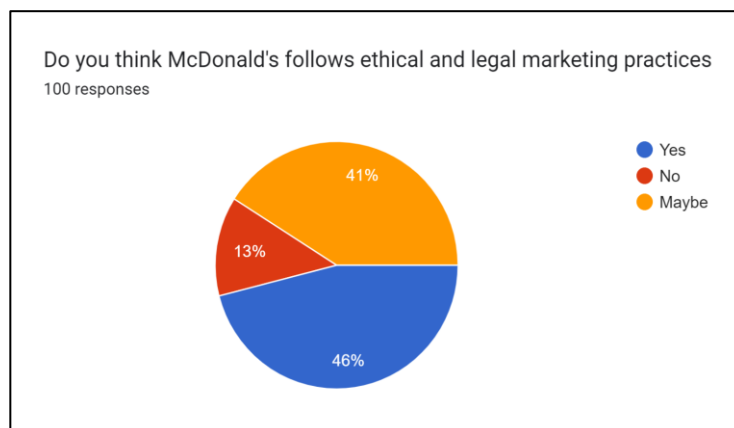
### Question 2: How often do you visit McDonald's?



## Output:

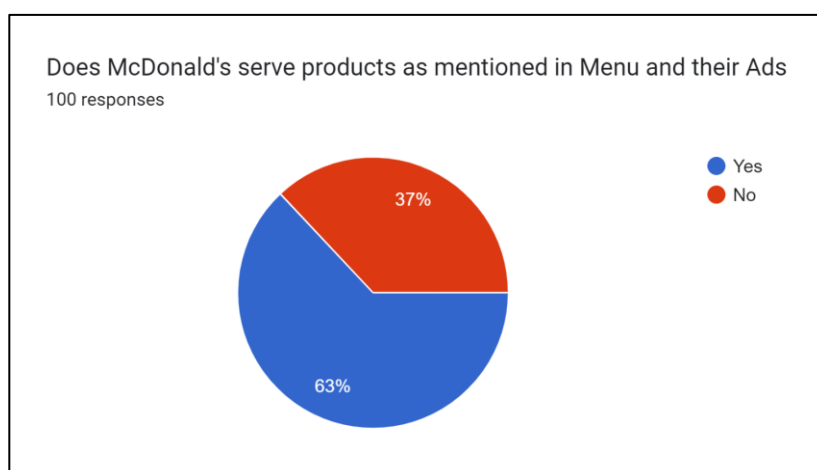
- The most frequent response is "Occasionally," with 34% of participants indicating they visit McDonald's in this manner.
- Those who visit McDonald's on a "Monthly" basis account for 24% of the responses.
- "Weekly" visits represent 26% of the responses, making it the second most common frequency.
- "Very rarely" visits are the least frequent, with 16% of participants indicating infrequent visits to McDonald's.

**Question 3:** Do you think McDonald's follows ethical and legal marketing practices?



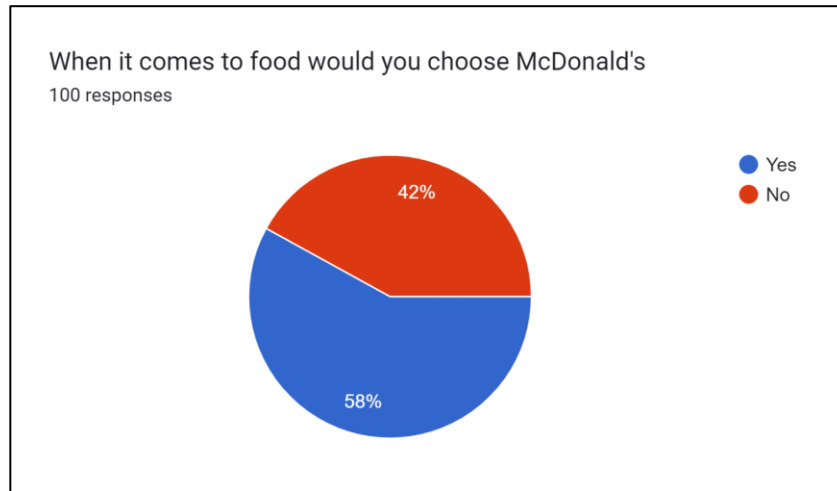
**Output:** A majority of respondents, 46%, believe that McDonald's follows ethical and legal marketing practices, indicating a positive perception. 41% are unsure, suggesting some uncertainty or lack of information. However, 13% hold a negative view, expressing doubts about McDonald's marketing practices.

**Question 4:** Does McDonald's serve products as mentioned in menu and their ads?



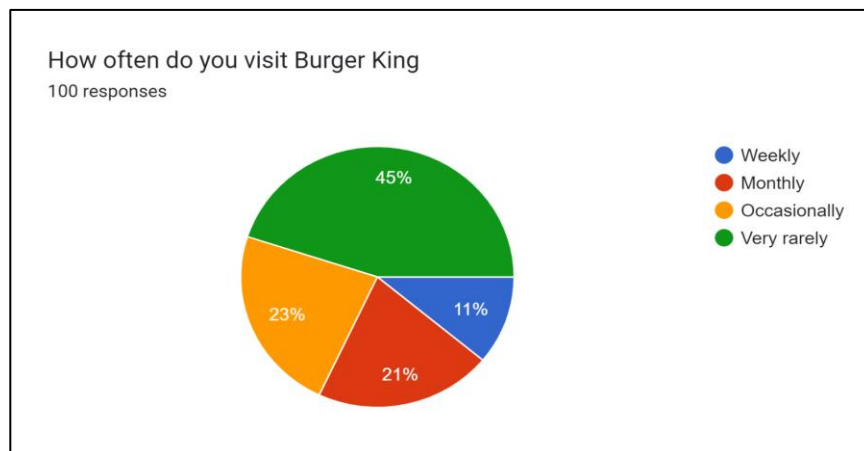
**Output:** A significant portion, 63%, of respondents believe that McDonald's serves products as mentioned in their menu and advertisements, indicating confidence in the consistency of their offerings. However, 37% of respondents expressed doubts or concerns about whether McDonald's delivers as promised in their menu and ads, suggesting a perception of potential inconsistencies or discrepancies in their products.

**Question 5:** When it comes to food would you choose McDonald's?



**Output:** A majority of respondents, 58%, indicated they would not choose McDonald's for food, while 42% expressed a preference for McDonald's when it comes to food. This suggests that a significant portion of the respondents may not Favor McDonald's as their food choice.

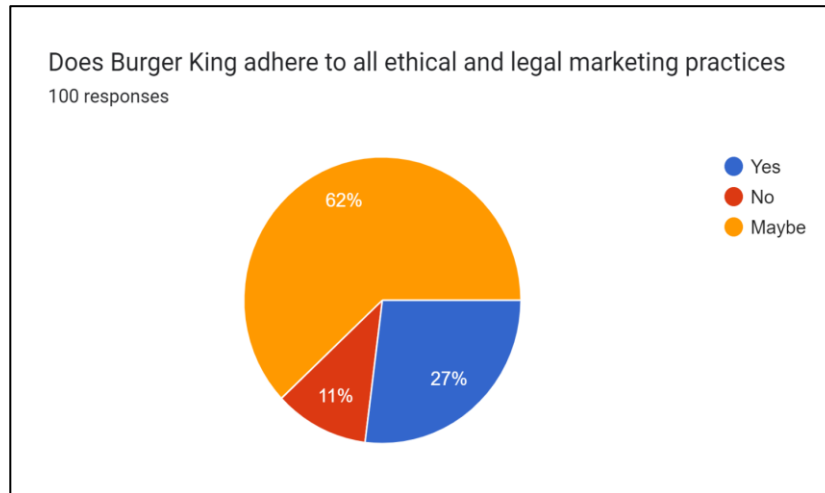
**Question 6:** How often do you visit Burger King?



**Output:**

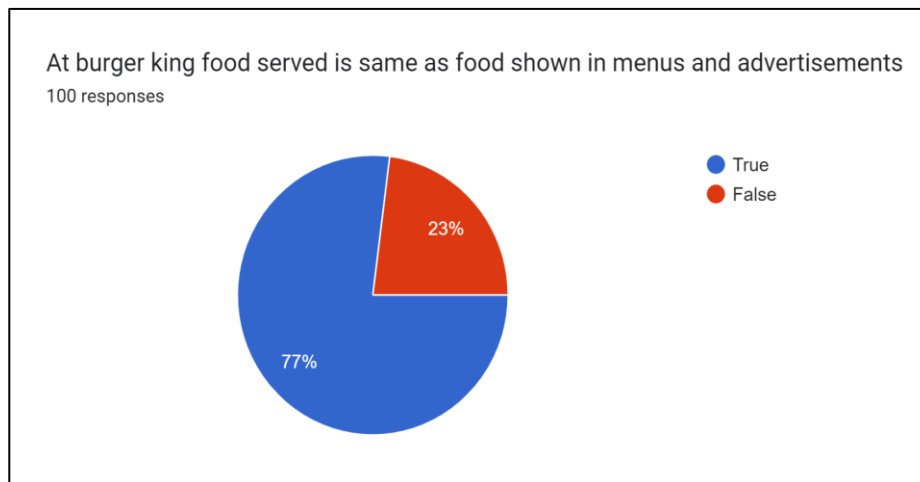
- "Very rarely" is the most common response, with 45% of participants indicating infrequent visits to Burger King.
- "Monthly" visits account for 21% of the responses, suggesting a substantial portion of participants visit on a less frequent but regular basis.
- "Occasionally" is the choice for 23% of participants, indicating sporadic visits.
- "Weekly" visits are the least frequent, with only 11% of respondents visiting Burger King on a weekly basis.
- Overall, these results show that a majority of participants visit Burger King either very rarely or occasionally.

**Question 7:** Does Burger King adhere to all ethical and legal marketing practices?



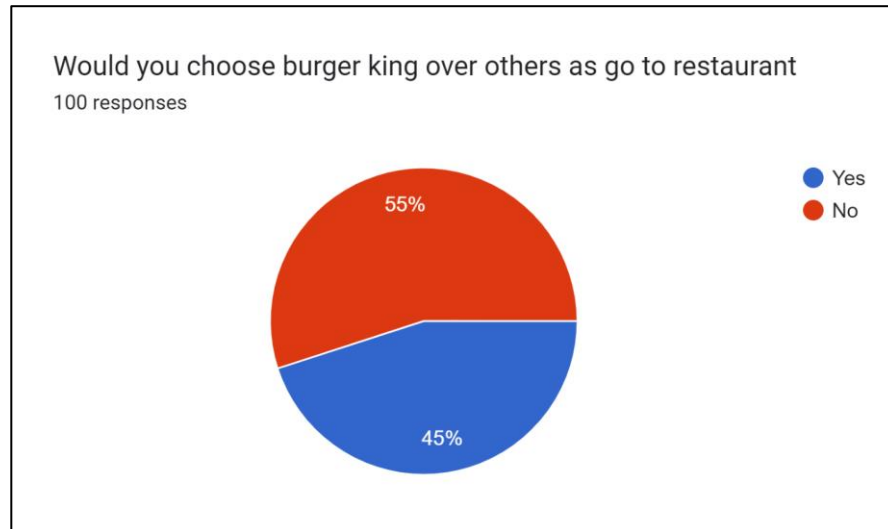
**Output:** The majority of respondents, 62%, believe that Burger King adheres to ethical and legal marketing practices, showing a positive perception. Only 11% think they do not, while 27% are uncertain, indicating some level of ambiguity or lack of information.

**Question 8:** At Burger King food served is same as food shown in menus and advertisements?



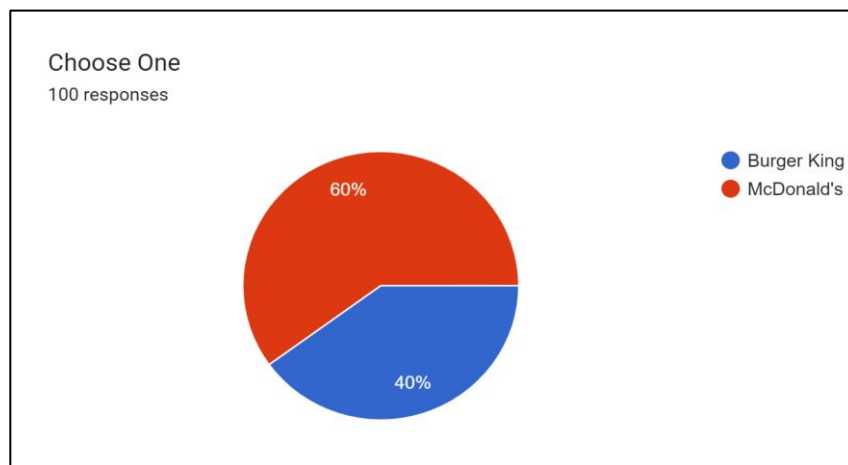
**Output:** A majority of respondents, 77%, believe that the food served at Burger King is not the same as what is shown in menus and advertisements, suggesting a perception of potential discrepancies. Only 23% think the food is accurately represented, indicating some level of confidence in menu and advertising accuracy.

**Question 9:** Would you choose Burger King over others as go to restaurant?



**Output:** 45% of respondents would choose Burger King as their go-to restaurant, while 55% would not, indicating a relatively balanced preference among the participants.

**Question 10:** Choose One between Burger King and McDonald's?



## Findings: -

### 1. Divergent Ethical Approaches:

- McDonald's tends to prioritize health-conscious messaging and transparency in its advertising, whereas Burger King often employs humor, shock value, and controversial themes.
- McDonald's advertisements frequently emphasize healthier menu options, sourcing transparency, and corporate responsibility.



- c. Burger King's advertising, on the other hand, often uses humor, irony, and unconventional campaigns that may push ethical boundaries.

## **2. Consumer Perceptions:**

- a. Consumers generally view McDonald's as more health-conscious and socially responsible compared to Burger King.
- b. The majority of respondents perceive McDonald's advertising as more transparent and honest than Burger King's.
- c. Burger King's controversial advertising sometimes polarizes consumer perceptions, with some finding it memorable and appealing while others view it as crossing ethical lines.

## **3. Impact on Consumer Trust and Loyalty:**

- a. McDonald's ethical advertising practices positively correlate with higher levels of consumer trust and loyalty.
- b. Burger King's use of controversial advertising tactics may result in a more polarized consumer base, with some consumers expressing stronger loyalty and others distancing themselves due to ethical concerns.

## **4. Influence on Consumer Behavior:**

- a. Health-conscious messaging in McDonald's advertising influences consumers to make healthier choices when dining out.
- b. Burger King's humorous and unconventional advertising may attract a segment of adventurous consumers seeking novelty in their fast-food experiences.

## **5. Effectiveness of Advertising Strategies:**

- a. McDonald's ethical advertising approach appears effective in appealing to health-conscious consumers.
- b. Burger King's controversial advertising generates significant buzz and attention but may not always translate into increased sales or long-term brand loyalty.

## **Conclusion: -**

1. In the ever-evolving landscape of fast-food marketing, where consumers are inundated with an array of options and messages, advertising ethics have emerged as a critical axis around which consumer perceptions, preferences, and loyalty pivot. This research embarked on a comprehensive exploration of the advertising ethics of two global giants in the fast-food industry: McDonald's and Burger King. Through a blend of content analysis and consumer perception surveys, we have illuminated the intricate web of ethical considerations that underpin their advertising strategies.
2. Practical implications include a recommendation for more transparent, health-conscious, and socially responsible advertising in the industry.
3. The research emphasizes the significant role of advertising ethics in the fast-food sector and its impact on consumer behavior and encourages a reflection on ethical advertising practices for a healthier and more responsible food culture.
4. Moreover, this research has practical implications for both practitioners and policymakers. Fast-food outlets should consider adopting more transparent, health-conscious, and socially responsible advertising strategies to foster consumer trust and loyalty.

5. In conclusion, this research illuminates the pivotal role of advertising ethics within the fast-food industry and its profound impact on consumer behavior. It encourages food retail outlets to reflect upon their ethical stance in advertising and its potential reverberations throughout their operations.

**References:**

- Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018
- Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006
- Customer Protection Act of 1986