

Obesity Levels in the Russian Federation— A Risk Reduction Portfolio Management Corporate Governance Approach to the Bio-Psycho-Social Influence of Marketing Projects in the Russian Fast Food Industry

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Abstract

The research is focused on determining Ethical Considerations of Obesity Levels in the Russian Federation—A Risk Reduction Portfolio Management Corporate Governance Approach to the Biopsychosocial Influence of Marketing Projects in the Russian Fast Food Industry. The birth of this idea is with Bombeck, who has authored more than 4000 newspaper columns about the day to day suburban life. The objectives of this research include: To know whether there is a link between fast food marketing in childhood and fast food consumption in adult life; whether a decline in children-oriented fast-food marketing campaigns causes lower obesity levels and associated economic and social problems and the last objective is to determine if a Russian Government Portfolio Management Framework would reduce the risks to the Russian economy with regards to the approach. A qualitative research method was used, which included literature review, survey and interviews. The findings of the research were; there is a link between fast food marketing campaigns in childhood and consumer behavior in adulthood. A decline in campaigns leads to a reduction in obesity levels and associated costs. The Russian government portfolio Management Framework will reduce obesity risks in the country. In conclusion, various steps need to be made to reduce the increase in obesity and the diseases that accompany it. Society, together with the government, should seek stringent measures to prevent manufacturers from exploiting the ill-informed masses. The curriculum in schools should be modeled to incorporate health and fitness. Besides, people need to change their mindset con-

cerning fast foods. However, this cannot be achieved unless the government is willing to place employ stringent measures.

Keywords

Obesity, Russian Federation, Marketing

1. Introduction

The author's interest is to find solutions that would help Russian Federation Administration to stop obesity spreading among adults, children and elderly people. Obesity can cause chronic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, musculoskeletal disorders and some cancers (World Health Organization, 2019). The author's desire is to make the nation healthy and then the world.

1.1. Background

According to the World Health Organization report the rate of obesity is continuously increasing health problems among children (World Health Organization, 2019). Specifically, for the Russian Federation the number of obese has increased in five years (2011-2016) by 50% (Alter, 2018). A complex coordinated and planned response is required as obesity levels rise. First, we need to understand the nature of obesity as a medical and physical condition before we can look at adaptive responses.

Obesity is a condition of excess body fat due to which the number and size of fat cells increase. Obesity affects health status and can cause chronic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, musculoskeletal disorders and some cancers (World Health Organization, 2019). The presence of obesity is commonly assessed by calculating the BMI which is a simple index of weight-for-height that is used to classify overweight and obesity in adults. It is defined as a person's weight in kilograms divided by the square of his height in meters (kg/m^2) (Cdc.gov, 2019).

According to comprehensive research findings at the institute of health metrics, there is a global increase of obesity and overweight at a rate of 27.5%, with about 47.1% increment in children and adolescence over the preceding 33 years (Whiteman, 2014). Studies carried out between 2012 and 2014 show that approximately 30% of Russian adults had obesity, which is closely approaching figures in the USA, currently at 34.9% (Kontsevaya et al., 2019: p. 104). Other research carried out between 2011 and 2014 found about 64.6% of Russian adults to have a BMI of more than 25 kg/m^2 , again showing signs of approaching USA prevalence level of 68% (Malik, Willett, & Hu, 2013). According to a 25-year study conducted to investigate obesity trends in Russia, the lifestyle problem had attained a 45.5% increase between 2011 and 2016 (Alter, 2018).

This thesis takes a view that obesity begins in childhood and manifests itself in

physical and mental distress in adulthood—it will propose that the Government Committee should take a Portfolio approach with future efforts; such as high school education (sports and cooking), health promotion (work incentives through businesses and medical practitioners), sector specific targeting (supermarkets by law cannot sell Sugar Soda to children).

1.2. Research Objectives

There are three objectives, these are: to provide data on past, current and projected levels of obesity since 1950-2050 in comparing the USA and USSR/Russian Federation over same time period; to use case study analysis of fast food outlet McDonald's to analyze their marketing strategy towards children; to determine if a Russian Government Portfolio Management Framework would reduce the risks to the Russian economy in **Table 1**. The link between Objectives/Questions/Propositions outlines the scope of the research.

2. Literature Review

The literature review was sourced from articles, scientific journals, books and

Table 1. Objectives, questions and proposition tree.

Objectives	Questions	Propositions
1) To provide data on past, current and projected levels of obesity since 1950-2050 in comparing the USA and USSR/Russian Federation over same time period.	a) Is there a link between fast food marketing in childhood and fast food consumption in adult life?	i) Eating habits are acquired as children ii) Eating habits are social behaviors (Pavlov's/skinner dogs) iii) Marketing forms stereotypical attitudes and gives bias
	a) Will a decline in children oriented fast food marketing campaigns cause lower obesity levels and associated economic and social problems?	i) Gifts to children make them want fast food more ii) Less consumption of fast food will lead to a healthier life iii) Less consumption of fast food will stimulate children's brain work iv) Decline in Obesity rates will result in Growing Economy
2) To use case study analysis of fast food outlet McDonald's to analyze their marketing strategy towards children.	a) Will a risk-based approach to Portfolio Management Framework at Government Level lead to decreased obesity rates among children?	i) Government change to labeling food rules will reduce extra calories consumed (how much calories in a package, not in 100 g) ii) Government restriction to sell fast food in schools will reduce obesity rates in the future iii) Government restriction to direct commercials towards children will reduce obesity rates
3) To determine if a Russian Government Portfolio Management Framework would reduce the risks to the Russian economy.		

research papers. It was gathered from 1950's till now. Since 1950 data shows an increased calorie consumption which leads to obesity (Jahns, Baturin, & Popkin, 2003). Obesity is a global lifestyle disease that is affecting millions of individuals around the world. Russia, like other developing countries, shows alerting trends in their obese statistics (Rtveladze et al., 2012). Russia is the largest former soviet country with a diverse and vibrant changing food culture. Russia has nine geographical time zones presenting a varying food consumption pattern (Rtveladze et al., 2012). These perspectives are all reflected in the literature review.

2.1. Obesity Statistics in Russia

Research shows that approximately 60% of Russians are currently overweight, among which 20% of them are obese (Yuen & Chu, 2019). The current state shows an increased risk of the disease. According to a 25-year study conducted to investigate obesity trends in Russia, the lifestyle problem had attained a 45.5% increase between 2011 and 2016 (Alter, 2018, para. 2). The study showed that 856 out of 100,000 Russian individuals were regarded obese in 2011, a number which held at 1245 in 2016 (Alter, 2018, para. 4). Other studies conducted to examine obesity prevalence in Russian adults aged between 26 - 64 years show that the trend is decreasing in educated men but not women (Kontsevaya et al., 2019: p. 104).

Obesity statistics in Russia do not show many variations with gender. According to research conducted by Kontsevaya et al., overall rates of obesity are higher in women than men though the trend might change with time (Kontsevaya et al., 2019: p. 104). The study shows that the burden of obesity is shifting towards the low socioeconomic class (Kontsevaya et al., 2019: p. 104). The research further found that BMI increased with age translating to 83.1% of the 55 - 64 age group as overweight and 41.9% between 25 - 34 years (Kontsevaya et al., 2019: p. 104). There is no published academic research that gives insight into the cost of dealing with obesity in the Russian Federation, however considering that Russia and the USA have similar obesity trends, in time, health-related costs will be as significant as in the USA.

2.2. Past Data on Obesity in USSR/Russian Federation and Comparison with the USA

According to shifts in food consumption data occurring between 1950 and 1989, the Russian diet changed from starch dominance to meat, dairy products, and sugar (Jahns, Baturin, & Popkin, 2003). Taking high calories food increase the hazards of the obesity epidemic (Bratanova et al., 2016). A study conducted on food consumption between 1950 and 1989 shows that a considerable number of the Russian population took food with high calories (Mowafi et al., 2014). Data collected about daily calories in both Russia and the USA show an increased calorie consumption in both countries since 1950 (Gould, 2017; Jahns, Baturin, & Popkin, 2003).

Figure 1 indicates the calorie intake in the United States between 1961 and 2013. There is an overall increasing trend in calorie intake in the US during the period. The figure shows that the United States' calorie intake between 1961 and 2013 was between 2880 and 3682. The individuals' calorie intake was above the daily recommended limit, which is 2000 for women and 2500 for men. The figure does not specify which type of food as it is an average for all classification. On the other hand, **Figure 2** represents the calorie intake for different kinds of food in Russia between 1950 and 1989. The calorie intake during the period in Russia reveals the same trend as in the United States except for potatoes (—■—), which shows a decreasing trend (Jahns, Baturin, & Popkin, 2003). The other lines in the graph represent the calorie intake of food such as milk (—◆—), bread (—), red meat (—■—) and sugar (—✱—) products. All categories have an increasing trend.

According to the study conducted in Russia and the USA between 1992-1998, overweight prevalence dropped from 15.6% to 9.0% in a period characterized by dreadful economic stress and reduction in density of the energy in a typical diet (Wang, Monteiro, & Popkin, 2002). The study found that the overweight prevalence was higher in children than adolescence in Russia but was less in the USA (Wang, Monteiro, & Popkin, 2002). The prevalence was also much higher in rural areas of Russia and the USA compared to other countries such as China and Brazil (Wang, Monteiro, & Popkin, 2002). The research is supported by findings from Popkin and Gordon, which show a contrasting decrease in Russian obesity statistics between 1992-1998 by about 9.0% while the rest of the world experience an increase (Popkin & Gordon-Larsen, 2016).

According to studies carried out between 2012 and 2014, approximately 30% of Russian adults showed signs of obesity, which closely approaches figures in the USA, which are at 34.9% (Kontsevaya et al., 2019: p. 104). Other research carried out between 2011 and 2014 found about 64.6% of Russian adults to have a BMI of more than 25 kg/m², which approaching USA prevalence level of 68% (Malik, Willett, & Hu, 2013). According to a 25-year study conducted to investigate obesity trends in Russia, the lifestyle problem had attained a 45.5% increase between 2011 and 2016 (Alter, 2018).

2.3. Management Solutions for Obesity Effects

Several researchers have proposed different methods of dealing with obesity. The following have gained attraction and can be considered risk management approaches.

- **Probiotics:** According to research on modulation of gut microbiota by probiotics, the study showed that the organism presents obesity controlling benefits to the host (Mazloom, Siddiqi, & Covasa, 2019; Lee et al., 2014).
- **Lifestyle Change:** Other researchers suggest methods like state and local programs, community interventions, and a healthy lifestyle as a recommendable approach to preventing and managing obesity (CDC, 2019; Jeffery, 1991; McTier-nan, 2016).

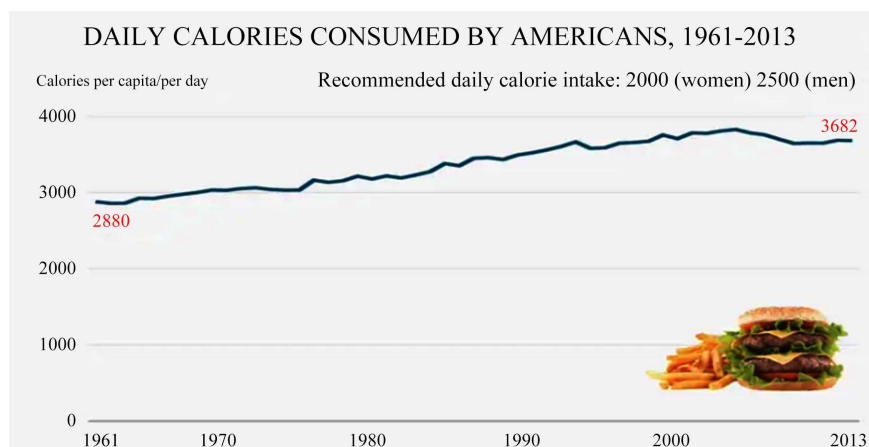


Figure 1. The USA recommended calorie uptake (Gould, 2017).

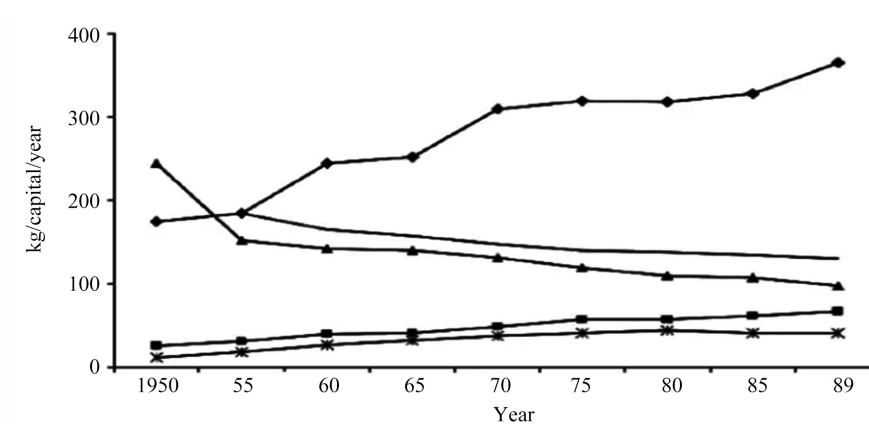


Figure 2. Russia Calories uptake (Jahns, Baturin, & Popkin, 2003).

- **Strategic Policy Approach:** Governments play a crucial role in the management of epidemics. According to research conducted to investigate the 2009 Australia and New Zealand health policy, the development of a methodical evidence-based program that gives feedback on the extent and scope of obesity together with cost-benefit analysis, are vital in obesity control projects (Allender et al., 2009). Other research conducted on Romp & Chomp, a community based strategic intervention against obesity initiated between 2004 and 2008, shows a significant lowered BMI from and ZMI in young children (de Silva-Sanigorski et al., 2010). Multi-setting community-wide policies can mitigate early age obesity, improving the child's diets. Other studies carried out to investigate obesity in Australian Context found that a comprehensive strategic policy approach involving government, non-governmental, and private sectors can aid in mitigating the epidemic (Sacks, Swinburn, & Lawrence, 2009).
- **Formal Incentives:** Some governments have developed policies to limit the consumption of foods which attribute to obesity. Studies show that artificially sweetened beverages should be discouraged as a composition of a healthful diet (Borges et al., 2017). According to reviews on the health planners' and

practitioners' views, formal incentives and providing planners with public health leadership responsibilities are some of the projects that can reduce obesity (Lake, Henderson, & Townshend, 2017).

- Promote Healthy Eating Among Children: The United States government has put in measures to address unhealthy eating habits, which results in obesity. The task force on childhood obesity has set up a marketing environment to promote healthy eating among children (Harris, Schwartz, & Brownell, 2010: p. 2). In response, McDonald's and Burger, which are among the largest fast-food marketers to children, pledged to advertise what is healthy for the children after joining Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) (Harris, Schwartz, & Brownell, 2010: p. 2). Many of the fast-food industries re-introduced more nutritious and healthier foods on their menu (Harris, Schwartz, & Brownell, 2010: p. 2).

3. Methodology

This research follows qualitative methodology. Qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data and that seeks to interpret meaning from these data that help understand social life through the study of targeted populations or places (ThoughtCo, 2020).

3.1. Scope of the Research

In the study, benchmarking data will be used to position the Russian perspective more accurately relative to other counties. The intended population of this research consists of Russian Federation residents. Russian population is 145,910,612 (Worldometers.info, 2020). There are at least 650 McDonald's restaurants throughout Russia now and the fast-food chain is thriving in the country (Business Insider, 2020). Russian traditional cuisine is very special consisting of meat dishes, vegetable salads, pink and black caviar, porridges, soups, borsch, pies and brown bread (Expat Guide to Russia|Expatica, 2020). The Russian traditional diet is considered a very balanced diet with all needed nutrients and vitamins. Russia is a perfect example how fast food spreading caused a national problem of obesity.

The sample population surveyed includes people aged 10 years and above and focuses on the Rights of a Child. Article 57 of the Russian Family Code provides that if a child is 10 years old or older, its opinion must be "considered". If the child's opinion is not followed, the parents who disregard its opinion must sufficiently explain the grounds therefore. The wishes of a child of 10 years or older can only be overruled under special circumstances (Antokolskaia, 2020). Article 12 of the UN Convention urges consideration of a child's opinion in light of the child's ability to formulate it. The Russian Supreme Court, in its Directive No. 10 of 27 May 1998, also obliged judges to investigate whether a child has been unduly influenced by the litigating parties, whether the child is aware of his or her interests, and on what grounds the child has reached his or her opinion (Anto-

kolskaia, 2020). This includes both males and females.

The goal is to limit the scope to people that truly lived in Russian environments and were fully exposed to Russian culture. Russians that currently lived abroad are not included nor represented in this survey. Interviewees were not Russian residents. Subject matters experts' opinions were collected from countries that face obesity prevention problem. Due to COVID-19 breakdown in 2020, the author had to conduct all surveys and interviews online via Survey Monkey, LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook and Emails.

3.2. Data Collection

Case Study

A case study approach is particularly useful to employ when there is a need to obtain an in-depth appreciation of an issue (Comparison of Exclusion, 2020). During the pre-research period, the issue was identified. McDonald's is the largest fast-food marketer to children (Harris, Schwartz, & Brownell, 2010: p. 2). The case study analysis of fast food outlets McDonald's would be used to analyze their marketing strategy towards children. The question investigated in this study was, "will a decline in children-oriented marketing campaigns cause lower obesity levels and associated economic and social problems?"

Four propositions are identified: gifts to children make them want fast food more; less consumption of fast food will lead to a healthier life; less consumption of fast food will stimulate cognitive abilities in children; a decline in obesity rates will result in a healthier economy. The first proposition is based on the notion that gifts would stimulate the children to buy those food items that are not allowed by their parents. The second proposition is based on the notion that less consumption of fast food would reduce the risk of obesity and ensure a healthy life. The third proposition is based on the notion that less consumption of fast foods would increase the intake of non-fat food items such as vitamins, minerals, and proteins and carbohydrates that would improve cognitive functioning. Finally, the fourth proposition was based on the notion that reduction in obesity would lead to higher physical fitness that would translate into a productive workforce and stimulated economy.

3.3. Data Analysis

Interviews

Interviewing is a qualitative research technique which involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation (Research-Methodology, 2020). Interviews took place concurrently with the survey (see page 37). Interviews were designed and distributed in English language. Interviewees were not Russian residents. Experts opinions were collected from countries that face obesity prevention problem. Due to COVID-19 breakdown in 2020, the author had to conduct all interviews online.

Health policy makers and Health Economics Professors were interviewed through email and LinkedIn to seek a professional opinions on different aspects such as: would decline in children oriented fast food marketing campaigns cause lower obesity levels and associated economic and social problems in the Russian Federation; would government restriction to sell fast food in schools cause reduction in obesity rates; and is there a link between fast food marketing in childhood and fast food consumption in adult life. The interview transcripts were coded and thematically analyzed in comparison to the literature obtained. The interview responses were thematically coded and interpreted based on the themes that were identified in the secondary data. The research also identified novel ideas and findings that were latent in previous studies.

Thirty-four messages were sent through LinkedIn to World Health Organization Leaders and Government policy makers. Also, fifteen emails were sent to Health Economics Professors. Also, I was lucky to get a response from Health Policy Maker in the Australian Government, as well as a Health Coordinator from World Health Organization.

Interview Questions: Appendix 2 has all the interview information summarized in the detail (See p. 59) (**Figure 3**).

Survey

The study was conducted as a survey since the present study only involved various stakeholders with different designations and job functions. Survey is a method of gathering information from a sample of people, traditionally with the intention of generalizing the results to a larger population ([Qualtrics, 2020](#)). Survey was designed and distributed in English and Russian languages. The author started to evaluate survey results in March and finished in April.

Data were collected using a survey designed and hosted by Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey is a platform designed to help collecting surveys and automatically analyze results (How it works|[SurveyMonkey, 2020](#)). The information obtained was not recorded in a manner that human subjects could be identified. A convenience sample was used, and the survey link was posted on different online sites, such as Facebook and Instagram as well as sent to friends and relatives. Survey results were analyzed by using Microsoft Excel. The survey data was coded and thematically analyzed in comparison to the literature obtained (**Figure 4**).

-
- 1) Do you agree that there is a link between fast food marketing in childhood and fast food consumption in adult life? Why?
 - 2) Do you agree that a decline in children oriented fast food marketing campaigns will cause lower obesity levels and associated economic and social problems? Why?
 - 3) Do you agree that a government restriction to sell fast food in schools will reduce obesity rates in the future? Why?
 - 4) Do you think government restriction to direct marketing towards children will reduce obesity rates? Why?
-

Figure 3. Interview questions.

-
- 1) What is your country of residence?
 - 2) How old are you?
 - 3) Below are listed 8 government policies that are considered to reduce the prevalence of obesity in Russian population. Please choose “YES” if you agree to the new regulation, or “NO” if you disagree.
 - a) Implement tax on sugar.
 - b) Create education programs through public health leadership such as sending health professional to schools as means of driving education & developing healthier habits.
 - c) Force all Russian fast-food industries to re-introduce more nutritious and healthier foods on their menu.
 - d) Force standardization on Russian food labeling on calorie content in products, not only in 100 g but also in total package.
 - e) Forbid to sell fast food and artificially sweetened beverages to children in schools.
 - f) Forbid to direct any fast food & sugary drinks marketing towards children.
 - g) Forbid to give any sort of incentives such as toys to children after purchasing fast-food.
 - h) Stream free to air TV “Food & Fitness” channel with workouts and exercises tips for daily life.
-

Figure 4. Survey questions.

3.4. Ethics

Research ethics takes important place in the research methodology because it provides guidelines for the responsible conduct of research. In addition, it educates and monitors scientists conducting research to ensure a high ethical standard. Some ethical principles: Honesty; Objectivity; Integrity; Carefulness; Openness; Respect for Intellectual Property; Confidentiality; Non-Discrimination; Competence; Legality; and Human Subjects Protection ([Research Guides: Research Methods: Ethics in Research, 2020](#)). Ethical issues concern next planning of the research: how to get access to information, people, data and the data collection, organizing and reporting ([Saunders et al., 2009](#)).

Due to the absence of ethics committee at Russian Presidential Academy, the survey and interviews questions were approved by academic supervisor Sarah Ross once trialed with pilot groups. The information obtained during survey and interviews was not recorded in a manner that human subjects could not be identified. The questions for the interviews and surveys have been elaborated in a neutral way, in order to not force one of the participants to say something that she or he did not want to say, and to not influence a certain type of answer. Moreover, all the information about the participants will never be disclosed under any circumstances. All the participants were aware of the non-disclosure agreement term before answering to the interview or survey questions. The research design of his study was not harming or embarrassing to any participants of this study.

The participants had a chance to receive the data collected after completion of the data collection program. The author individually contacted the interview participants. Additionally, survey participants could see the results statistics right after completion upon request. I being the author, promise to provide all ob-

tained information in this paper and if necessary, per request, provide any additional information as a proof of the survey and interviews conducted.

4. McDonald's Case Study

McDonald's is among the most successful fast-food brands across the world, partly because of its strategic approach to marketing. The company uses multiple marketing platforms such as social media, out of home, print, and TV ads to get their message across a broad and diverse audience (Guran & Bereket, 2011: p. 484). Customer perception is a key determinant of success for any marketing strategy. McDonald's has been accused of several of negligent practices for refusing to address the impact of fast foods and predatory marketing on children. McDonald's has failed the address the contribution of the predatory market to the rise in obesity and other lie style diseases in children.

McDonald's uses a demographic segmentation strategy that considers age as the parameter. McDonald mainly targets children, youth, and young families in urban areas (Smits et al., 2015: p. 316). Children especially affected by predatory marketing of fast food joints because they are attracted to fast foods and toys. The increase in fast food consumption partly causes the rising rate of childhood obesity in the US (Harris, Schwartz, & Brownell, 2010: p. 1). Fast food joints have an ethical responsibility to address their impacts on public health, especially among children.

4.1. SWOT Analysis

A SWOT Analysis reveals that McDonald's has various strengths that help grow the brand. First, McDonald's is a global brand that appeals to persons of all ages. It has been ranked among the top 100 global brands (Ceil, 2017: p. 36).

- In terms of strengths the company has a strong operational capacity, which enhances its ability to serve millions of customers without wavering on quality and experience. It has a world-class supply chain and customer service. Lastly, McDonald's has various successful products on the menu, such as the Big Mac and Chicken McNuggets, which have become strong brands on their own right (Dixit, 2017: p. 871).
- In terms of weaknesses, McDonald's has low revenue growth, which indicates that it has not been able to attract additional customers to its restaurants. Also, McDonald's has weak product development as it has only offered a limited range of products over the years. The company is slow to innovate and try new ideas.
- In terms of opportunities, McDonald's much potential to expand further by opening new branches across the world. Additionally, the dining out culture is increasing, which provides the opportunity to attract more customers.
- In terms of threats, McDonald's faces tough competition both locally and abroad from other major fast-food franchises and restaurants (Ceil, 2017: p. 36). Therefore, McDonald's must compete based on pricing, quality, and customer convenience. Another key threat is the growing consciousness about

the impacts of fast foods on health.

4.2. McDonald's Marketing to Children

Children are among the top consumers of purchased food products in the US. Therefore, fast food joints such as McDonald's have adopted strategies of marketing to children. For example, McDonald's attracts children through the happy meals menu in which a child is given a free toy for every happy meal they purchase. The toys range from hot wheels to the various fictional characters on Disney (Sonntag et al., 2015: p. 8569). In various branches, McDonald's has a dedicated "playing place" for children to play a wide range of games such as hockey. This strategy helps to sell McDonald's as a fun place where families can eat as their children play. As noted above, consumer perception is a key factor influencing the success of marketing strategies. By creating the perception of being a child-friendly place, McDonald's has been able to win over millions of urban families across the US. McDonald's has positioned itself as an affordable place to eat that does not compromise on the quality of food and hygiene. However, the quality of the food is objectionable, considering the negative health impacts it has.

Child-oriented marketing of fast foods to children is one of the leading causes of childhood obesity in developed countries. Obesity is the natural response to an environment filled with energy-dense foods that are constantly marketed to people (Andreyeva et al., 2011: p. 224). Children are particularly susceptible to the persuasive messages coded in advertisements because they are still developing cognitively. For example, a child in the pre-cognitive stage cannot differentiate between a commercial and a television program.

Children often perceive the messages in advertisements as factual. Research indicates that some children use advertisements as a source of information for what is on the shelves (Paul & Roy, 2014: p. 103). Therefore, the marketing of fast foods to children is an unfair practice because it exploits their cognitive limitations. It is also a breach of the child's right to information under the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child. According to Sadeghirad et al. (2016: p. 948), acute exposure to fast food advertisements influences a child's behavior and attitude towards the consumption of unhealthy products. The SWOT analysis shows that McDonald's is a major brand and has major influence over the community (Boyland et al., 2015: p. 1012). The question of whether the company should be allowed to continue to advertise to children is an ethical one.

Lastly, marketing to children and the rise of childhood obesity are related factors. This is because fast foods accommodate more than 40% of all food advertisements aimed at children. Therefore, McDonald's' targeting of children for advertisement is the exploitation of the children. Policymakers and public health officials have a responsibility to protect consumers, especially the vulnerable ones, from exploitative corporate practices. Childhood obesity is likely to keep increasing if fast food advertisements targeting children are not regulated (Figure 5).



Figure 5. The truth about food marketing (LoDolce, 2015, n.p).

5. Interviews & Survey

5.1. Interviews

The research interviewed three interviewees who acted at different capacities in the health sector to remove biases from the study. The first interviewee was a government civil servant with 20 years of experience working in the health policy sector. The second was a Health Sector Activist working with the World Health Organization and having five years of experience. The last interviewee was a Health Economics Professor with 22 years of experience currently a University professor. The choice of the interviewees took into aspect the health part and the economics part, which considers the effects of adopting some adverse changes in fast-food marketing. All the interviewees agreed that there was a substantial amount of evidence to link fast food marketing strategies in the early years of a child, which grows into adulthood eating habits.

- Respondent 1:

“Absolutely, there’s a lot of examples that demonstrate early learnings (positive or negative) can flow through to adulthood. Overweight and obese children typically grow into overweight and obese adults, who are susceptible to chronic complaints such as diabetes and cardio vascular disease”. (...) (Respondent 1, Government worker from health policy sector, Appendix 2 p. 60)

- Respondent 2:

“Some people say that children don’t understand persuasive intent until they are older. However, cognitive structures are still being formed in the brain, making children more susceptible to external influences. One research, don’t remember the name, found that children don’t realize that athletes in television commercials are paid to promote products. They also believe that children in advertisements are real rather than paid actors, and they confuse advertisements with news items. Older kids, even more exposed because they are forming their adult identities and are susceptible to societal pressures to meet certain standards”. (...) (Respondent 2, Health Sector Activist from WHO, Appendix 2 p. 62)

- Respondent 3:

“Obesity is a complex disease that can start in the childhood and then follow you for the rest of your life. Kids are easy to trick. Hide a ball behind your back and you can convince them it mysteriously disappeared. It’s well known that brand equity is easier to establish with children and likely to stay relevant well into adulthood due to its nostalgic nature. If a company wanted to start building brand recognition and loyalty early, they should begin with kids as soon as possible”. (...) (Respondent 3, Health Economics Professor, Appendix 2 p. 64)

The interviewees unanimously held that childhood habits are more likely to be carried to an adult life due to the nostalgic effect. The advertisers may claim that children are unaware of their actions, but the interviewees refuted this school of thought. Reducing or limiting fast-food marketing campaigns would help children to be exposed to better eating habits. However, the drive to have restrictions on fast food marketing would be such a process because of the economic impact on society. It would mean the closure of some industries hence the loss of jobs.

- Respondent 3:

“It depends on what’s been marketed to children and who has the bigger budget to get their attention. We need to find the balance between education on things like portion control while also accommodating capitalism and consumerism”. (Respondent 3, Health Economics Professor, Appendix 2 p. 65)

Nonetheless, eliminating fast foods is not the solution to the problem of obesity. A counteractive measure should be employed that makes healthier alternatives readily available in places where young people love to visit, such as fields of play. This would ensure that no jobs are lost and also result in improved health-care.

5.2. Survey

The survey objectives were few and were considering how people would react to certain adjustments by key players in the food industry (Table 2).

The first in line was to find out how people responded to an effort to seek to implement a tax on sugar would turn out. This is in consideration that most fast food industries chiefly use sugar in their foodstuffs. The majority won with a slight difference of only 10%. 55% of people interviewed accepted the idea to implement a tax on sugar, while 45% did not agree with the opinion. In the second survey objective, 100% of people agreed that educational programs should be created through public health leadership, such as sending health professionals to schools to educate young children on healthier habits. They trusted education as the best form of passing information to young children.

Table 2. Survey results.

Policy	Yes	No
Implement a tax on sugar	55%	45%
Educational programs should be created through public health leadership	100%	0%
Force fast-food industries to re-introduce more nourishing healthier foods	97.50%	2.50%
Force standardization on Russian food labeling on the total calorie content should not be restricted to 100 g but the whole package	90%	10%
Prohibit the selling of fast foods and artificially sweetened beverages to young children in learning institutions	87.50%	12.50%
Curb the directing of fast foods and sugary drinks to children in the advertising and marketing industry	85%	15%
Children should not be given incentives such as toys after buying fast food	35%	65%
Airing of a free to air TV channel with the major themes being food and fitness without exempting workouts and exercises	95%	5%

A majority of people wanted the government to force fast-food industries to re-introduce more nourishing healthier foods on their products. 97.50% supported that the industries should be forced to comply, while 2.50% refused. Most Russians are intelligent about their health and the need to have a healthy society. Further, 90% of Russians want the government to force standardization on Russian food labeling on the total calorie content should not be restricted to 100g but the whole package. 10% of the citizens do not see the need for forcing standardization by the government on industries to the label calorie content in the entire package.

In another objective, 87.50% of Russians supported the idea to prohibit the selling of fast foods and artificially sweetened beverages to young children in learning institutions. 12.50% concluded that it is not forthright to forbid the sale of fast foods and artificially sweetened beverages in schools. 85% of people urged the government to curb the directing of fast foods and sugary drinks to children in the advertising and marketing industry. In another objective under study, 65% of interviewees refused that children should not be given incentives such as toys after buying fast food. In comparison, 35% did not see any problem with it. In the last survey objective, 95% of people advocated for the airing of a free to air TV channel with the major themes being food and fitness without exempting workouts and exercises hints for prodder daily living. 5% did not support the idea.

6. Findings and Propositions Summarized

The study came up with the following findings and propositions on the ethical considerations of obesity levels in the Russian Federation. The study found out that Russia is severely impacted by obesity and its results. Most people are concerned about their health conditions and that of their children. More than 50% of the population is advocating that the government should implement measures that would help to promote good health amongst its future generation. The Russians are calling on the responsible bodies to ensure that the industries indicate the total amount of calories in a package, ban the selling of sugary foods in schools.

Moreover, enterprises should re-regenerate themselves to start producing healthier foods to ensure that no jobs are lost. Also, it is essential to say that depression can result in the psychological effect of being overweight. Changing the line of production to a healthier diet would shake the economy for a small period, but the health benefits and savings in healthcare cost reduction will outweigh that gap. It is also indisputable that there is a link between fast food marketing in childhood and their consumption into adulthood. According to Pavlov's theory, social behaviors such as eating are carried throughout someone's life, and that is the same with children and fast foods.

The [World Health Organization \(2019\)](#) defined obesity as a condition of surplus body fat, which makes the number and size of body fat cells to enlarge. The

researcher went in-depth from 1950 to date to find a broad view and the trends in fast food marketing. It looked at how things were done in the past, how they have transformed till to date, and how the future is likely to be. According to [Jahns, Baturin, and Popkin \(2003\)](#), it is indisputable that calorie consumption has steadily increased since 1950, which is a significant contributor to obesity. Obesity is a challenging health problem in all developed countries, and the developing countries are also joining the trend. Russia is an exception amongst the other communist countries. It enjoys a diverse food economy due to the nine different time zones; it has hence allowed for varied food consumption patterns.

Several propositions were recommended from the study. First, the public should be educated about their health to ensure that they engage in healthy practices. Secondly, it is necessary to prioritize children's education, especially in a healthy diet, physical fitness, and exercise. Finally, the industries should stop considering the profits they bank each financial year and also seek to improve people's health by emphasizing healthy practices to improve the health of the people. Finally, the government should weigh the risk of letting their citizens consume whatever is manufactured but the profit-oriented industries to that of putting restrictions on production guidelines.

7. Conclusion on Questions and Objectives

To know whether there is a link between fast food marketing in childhood and fast food consumption in adult life, the researchers analyzed data on past, current and projected levels of obesity since 1950-2050 in comparing the USA and USSR/Russian Federation over the same period. The research used a case study of the McDonald's fast-food outlet to examine their strategy of marketing that targets children. It assisted in knowing whether a decline in children-oriented fast-food marketing campaigns would cause lower obesity levels and associated economic and social problems. In the third objective, the research sought to determine if a Russian Government Portfolio Management Framework would reduce the risks to the Russian economy with regards to the approach hence reducing obesity rates among children.

The research defined obesity as the condition of excess body fat due to which the number and size of fat cells increase. Research indicated that more the 60% of the Russian population are overweight and amongst them 20% are obese, which closely approaches figures in the USA. The research employed a qualitative methodology since the survey questions would help to identify if stakeholders agree to the new policy measures. It also used a cross-sectional approach because the prevalence of obesity and the marketing of fast foods would not suddenly change in the target population. The technique combined a qualitative approach to understand the aspects behind the cause-and-effect relationships between the observations.

The research concluded that there is a link between fast food marketing in childhood and fast food consumption in adult life and that the risk-based ap-

proach to Portfolio Management Framework at Government Level will lead to decreased obesity rates among children. Government Portfolio should include: tax on sugar; educational programs through public health leadership; more nourishing healthier foods among fast-food industries; standardization on Russian food labeling on the total calorie content; policy on not selling fast foods and artificially sweetened beverages to young children in learning institutions; policy on not marketing fast foods and sugary drinks to children in the advertising industry. Also, 95% of Russians voted to air TV channel with the major themes being food and fitness without exempting workouts and exercises.

7.1. Recommendation for Further Research

Based on the results of the study, there is still a gap that needs more research to include ways through which people can get enough information to keep healthy. The relevant programs still lack and should be identified to ensure that people get the necessary knowledge to overcome the problem. More studies should explore how to implement various ethical considerations using modern ways of communications, such as social media platforms. Filling this gap will ensure that more recommendations are given to guide the means through which the government can enforce various regulations to combat the large intake of calories that some companies produce excessively. The studies that exist do not address some of the measures that the public should take to ensure the reduction of obesity. Comprehensive research on the best actions to mobilize the public will help the government in making federal laws that can limit the spread of fast food industries. Also, further research is needed on the question: "Will a decline in children-oriented fast-food marketing campaigns cause lower obesity levels and associated economic and social problems?"

7.2. Reflection of Lessons Learned

People are still ill-informed about the recommended food that they should take to protect them from obesity. Some people take foods that put their life at risk without knowing the future negative impacts. They need special education to ensure that they engage in the best practices that will improve their welfare. Most individuals are willing to advocate for better eating habits but cannot manage to do so because of a lack of knowledge. People are concerned about their children, but they cannot find better options on how to feed them. The daily food consumption puts the lives of children at risk that may result in future effects that may be irreversible and harmful. More research is necessary to equip people with more knowledge to ensure that they nurture their children to practice eating habits that will protect them from obesity.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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