2) Does Target (or any company for that matter) have an ethical responsibility to its customers to keep information private? Discuss.

It is reasonable for company to collect and analyze to enhance profit. However, when it comes to how those data are used and to what extent individual privacy is compromised, ethical issue come up. Target have a certain ethical responsibility to its customers to keep informative private. For some customers, pregnancy information can be extremely sensitive and they had no intent or expectation of sharing in a period. Target should figure out and respect that. Otherwise, they may lose customers’ trust or loyalty. There several ways for them to execute their privacy protect responsibility. Firstly, Data collection and application should be transparent to customers. Customers should opt in their data-sharing arrangement and understand exactly what was being done with their information. Secondly, they can choose the ad method, ad content and frequency. For example, pregnancy product ad can be sent by more private way like phone text or email instead of mail brochure. They also should be careful on their ad content and frequency to make sure customer will not be bothered too much.

3) What role does/should government regulation play in data analytics?

Companies are profit driven organization, they have limited incentive to properly regulate themselves on data analytics. Therefore, government need to take a more active role in regulating data publication or transaction. Customers should be warned and protected from hacking of consumer records, identity theft, and fraudulent misrepresentations in e-commerce transactions.

Government should have laws or rules to force companies to give individuals greater control over their own data use range. Costumers’ sensitive information, such as cell phone number, address, pharmacy and alcohol purchases, should not be used or transferred without knowledge. Any collection, analysis, and sharing of data should be in a protected, permission-based environment. Government should force a range of industry standard security measures, like encryption and firewalls, to protect consumers’ privacy and sensitive information. Government should monitor the data amalgamation and analytics market. If that bring serious harm to consumer, the relative company should be punished.