

Abstract

Thesis title: Nutrition and health claims in purchasing of food products

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The main aim of the thesis is to establish how nutrition and health claims placed on the packaging of a food product influence the process of consumer purchase. To achieve that aim it is necessary to ascertain the dimensions of consumers' perception of such labels, to specify the conditions of behaviors of those who purchase foods with nutrition and health claims (FNHC) and to create a model of purchasing behavior' of consumers on the FNHC market.

In order to achieve the main aim of the thesis the following detailed purposes were formulated:

1. to identify the factors that determine the purchase of foods with nutrition and health claims
2. to define consumers' perception of selected characteristics/ attributes of products with claims
3. to define the influence of nutrition and health claims on the perception of the attributes of a food product.

The research focus was on the conditions of the purchasing process of products meant to be healthy which contain on the packaging nutrition and health claims.

The research timelines were set as follows: for the analysis of secondary resources from 2000 to 2015, whereas primary research was conducted between 2012 and 2015. Women aged 18 and over purchasing food products were selected as the subject of the study. The sample design used was quota sampling and the study was conducted on the territory of the Wielkopolska region.

The following hypotheses were formulated in the thesis:

1. The perception of foods with nutrition and health claims varies and depends on the declared state of health and the nutritional knowledge of the consumers.
2. Understanding the contents of nutrition and health claims by the consumer significantly influences the process of perceiving foods with such claims.
3. Age, subjective evaluation of one's state of health and the consumers' level of nutritional knowledge have impact on the interest and understanding of FNHC and purchase of products with FNHC.
4. Purchasing foods with nutrition and health claims is characterised by a very high level of consumer risk.
5. The perception of foods with claims is clear and unambiguous only in relation to the attributes of health and safety. Other attributes of foods with nutrition and health claims are not perceived precisely and clearly.

The quantitative method used was direct individual interview based on an interview questionnaire. To complement the quantitative research and to scrutinize the research hypotheses formulated the methods of hidden observation. As a result of conducting the research it was established that the purchasing behaviors of consumers on the market of foods with nutrition and health claims are very different.

The awareness of the existence of nutrition and health claims among female consumers is on a relatively average level; important factors shaping that level are: the age of the female respondents, their state of health, educational level, nutrition knowledge, expenditure on foods, the number of people in a household and the nutritional model used based on the consumption of low-calorie food.

Interesting conclusions followed from the analysis of the relationships between the noticing of the claims, understanding them and their interpreted meaning by the female consumers.

The results of the research showed that the existing relations depend on the concrete content of a claim. The claims analysed are those on products aimed at consumers with specific needs of enriching their body with selected nutritional ingredients and vitamins; therefore they are noticed more effectively, and at the same time understood better and in this way become important for those purchasing these concrete products. Other consumers not interested in specific nutritional ingredients nor vitamins notice the claims less often, and so they are also in doubt about their importance for them.

The research conducted revealed that the attitudes and opinions formulated about nutritional and health claims are very ambiguous among female consumers. A precise definition of opinions relating to various areas related to the claims was very problematic to a large group of respondents.

An important result of the primary research conducted is the construction of the model of market behavior of the consumers in the process of purchasing foods with nutritional and health claims. It clearly shows that: an indispensable condition having an impact on the purchasing decisions of consumers

is both a positive attitude to products that is manifested via opinions and noticing on the packaging of products specific contents of nutrition and/ or health claims.

There is no doubt about the fact that in the coming years the food market will be dominated by the healthy foods, therefore the producers of such products should undertake all actions that will broaden the knowledge and awareness of consumers in the area of healthy nutrition and offer them an assortment that will fulfil their expectations with regard to being healthy, available and affordable.

Only a number of coordinated actions supporting the health of consumers can guarantee success to the producers of foods with nutrition and health claims and guarantee the society a healthy nutritional offer.