

CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS OF NUTRITION AND HEALTH CLAIMS FROM FOOD LABELS IN ROMANIA

Cecilia Georgescu^{1*}, Adriana Birca², Monica Mironescu¹, Mihaela Adriana Tita¹, Mark Shamtsyan³, Ion Dan Mironescu¹, Ovidiu Tita¹

¹Faculty of Agriculture Science, Food Industry and Environmental Protection, "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, Dr. Ioan Ratiu 7-9, 550012 Sibiu, Romania

²Faculty of Technology and Food Industry Management, Technical University of Moldova, Stefan cel Mare 28, 2004 Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

³St. Petersburg State Institute of Technology (Technical University), Moskovsky prospect 26, 19001 St. Petersburg, Russia

*e-mail: cecilia.georgescu@ulbsibiu.ro

Abstract

Label is the most important thing when you want to buy food. When deciding which foods to buy information to labels about nutrition and health it may not be clear to many consumers. What was the best choice for healthiest? The purpose of this study is to analyse consumer's understanding and used of nutrition labels from food products.

This research is descriptive, as it attempts to describe perceptions, attitudes, and self-reported practices of consumers regarding the topic of nutrition labeling. Data for this study was obtained from consumer questionnaire, in February - June 2015, in Sibiu city from Romania. 507 questionnaires were completed from people from different sex, age, culture, education and monthly earning. The information on questionnaires were processed and interpreted used excel program.

Significant differences were found on the use and understanding of nutrition labels from Romanian consumers. From 507 consumers from Romania, 218 of respondents (~38 %) consider that the price is the most important in the decision to buy a product, 129 (~22 %) consider the nutrition value, 179 (~31%) consider the brand and 54 (~9 %) consider that packaging design influence their decision to buy a product. About the understandability of nutrition labels, the respondents considers very easy for understanding the following: the „list of ingredients” - 216 of respondents (~44%); „fat content” - 225 of respondents (~ 35%); „proteins” - 151 of respondents (~33%); „energy” – 202 of respondents (~33%).

Consumers from Sibiu are increasingly exposed to a wide variety of messages about the relationship between diet and health and there is widespread interest in the nutritional content of food. Information about nutrition and health in the press can appear complex of conflicting and it may not be clear to many consumers what the healthiest choice is when deciding which foods to buy.

Key words: *Nutrition and health claims, Food labelling, Health food. Perception.*