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Impact of food labeling information on consumer purchasing decision: with special reference to faculty of Agricultural Sciences

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Abstract

Consumer's attitudes towards the nutritional aspect of the foods are increasing rapidly. In this context, labels of food products play a significant role in providing the relevant nutrition information to consumers. This study was conducted with a view of identifying important nutritional labeling aspects that consumers would examine at the time of purchasing. Ultimate objective was to draw conclusions that provide important information for the food processors about consumer behavior in related to food nutritional aspects and the purchasing intention. Pre-tested structured questionnaire was employed to collect data from random sample of 90 respondents. Rank Based Quotient test and descriptive analytical tools were used to analyze the data. This study shows that majority of the respondents tend to examine the labels when making the purchasing decision due to evaluate the suitability of the food product for vegetarians, religious reasons, to avoid diseases related to food and to check whether the food is organically grown or not. Complicated life styles, their brand loyalty and complicated nature of food labels were the major reasons for not examine food labels. The promising opinions of respondents on existence of food labels were to know the expiry date, to know the nutritional composition and as a legal requirement. Majority of the consumers importantly concern on nutrient status. Monosodium Glutamate content strongly influence the purchasing decision of considerable fraction of the respondents. Name of the food was rated the most important mandatory labeling information. Food safety, environmental protection, origin of the food and brand reputation were the most concerning factors when observing food labels in the process of purchasing food products. According to the Suggestions produced by the respondents, making information easier to understand, standardizing the presentation information, creating colorful and attractive labels were highlighted as the major suggestions. Eventually findings of this study suggests food producers should draw and implement the strategies by considering above key results in order to improve the status of food labeling as well as nutritional status of the consumers.

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1. Introduction

Consumer’s attitudes towards the nutritional aspect of the foods and proper eating habits are increasing rapidly. Therefore, consumers’ are more concern about balance and healthier diet. Further they are becoming more demanding about nutritional information, safe and quality food. In this context, labels of food products play a significant role as it provides all the mandatory information regarding nutritional composition, safe and quality food. Basically, labels provide information on ingredients of the food products, nutritional properties, preparation, storage, etc.¹ Consumers purchasing decisions mainly depend on the perception of the product. Food labeling is one of the most important factors affecting for the purchasing decisions of the consumers. When designing the labels for food products, manufacturers should follow the legislations imposed by the government of a particular country. Labels should provide detailed and exact nature and characteristics of the food product without misleading the consumers. Despite the research interests regarding consumer purchasing behavior, less information is available on the influence of label for consumer’s purchasing decisions. Therefore, this study examines the consumer’s attitudes towards the food labeling and influence of food labels on consumer’s purchasing decision.

2. Methodology

The deductive approach was used in this study. Quantitative data were gathered using cross sectional survey strategy. Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka was the research location. The target population was comprised with all the students of Faculty of Agricultural Sciences (275). Due to limited time period and inadequate financial budget, 90 respondents were randomly selected to evaluate the objectives of this study. Computer-aided simple random selection method was used to select the cases. Primary data were collected through Pre-tested self-administered structured questionnaire. The questionnaire for this study consisted with demographic information, dependent variable and independent variable. Summary of dependent and independent variable is as follows.

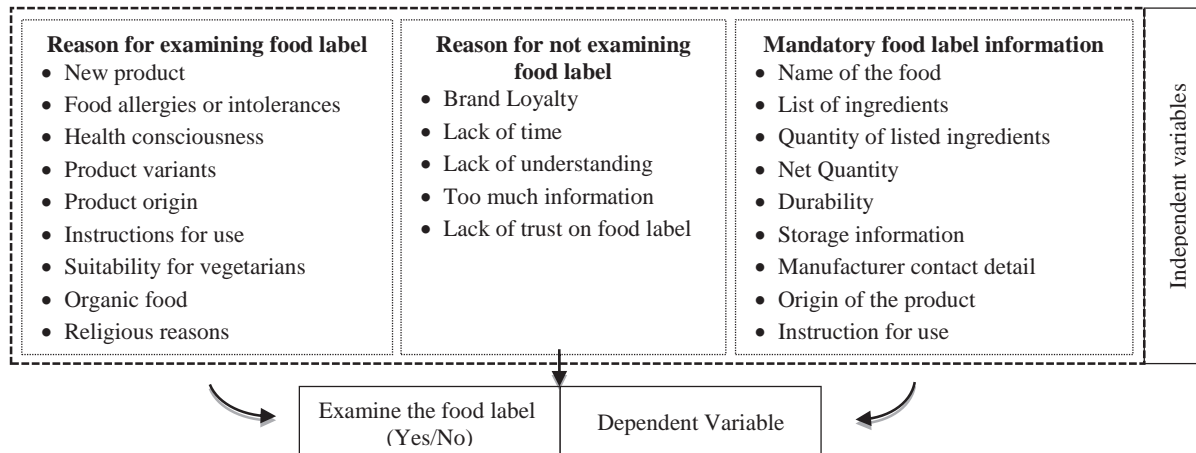


Fig.1. Summary of variables

Further analysis of data was done by utilizing SPSS-21 Statistical Package and MS Excel 2010 software package. Rank Based Quotient (RBQ) test and descriptive analysis techniques were used as main analysis tools.

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