



## THE IMPACT OF FOOD LABELING ON CONSUMER PURCHASING DECISION: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

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### Abstract

*The current paper examines the literature on food labeling and its impact on consumer buying behavior in order to guide ongoing researches and highlight topics for further research. A systematic search was done on research studies related to consumer preferences, label comprehension and usage and the influence of food labels on consumer purchasing behavior. The study found that while consumers had positive attitude towards information mentioned on food labels, they had limited knowledge of them. More research is needed to understand how alternative labeling designs affect consumer behavior. Buying decisions were most influenced by label design, nutritional information, health claims, accessibility, and quality. This review paper improved the understanding of consumer buying intentions and the effectiveness of food product labels.*

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**Keywords:** Food labels, Consumer, Purchasing behavior, nutritional information

### Introduction

A consumer can be broadly defined as someone who buys things and services for personal enjoyment or for the other members of their family, rather to generate additional income.

Food labeling has a great influence on consumer purchasing decisions. This assists them by providing necessary information about the nutrient content, ingredients used, self life and manufacturing and expiry dates of food products. This review aims to find out and assess the

impact of food labeling on consumer behavior and emphasize its significance in encouraging informed choices and better dietary habits. Merwe et al. (2011) had conducted a study on South African consumers purchasing behavior and suggested that the participants studied food levels to determine the nutritional value, personal benefits help features and product quality. various purchasing influences were also identified, employing that food labels may motivate consumers to purchase a product or they may be unresponsive to the label and in different by being aware of information but not hesitant to buy a product that does not indicate essential information. Some consumers purchasing decision may be influenced by a variety of indirect consideration variables including situational for (e.g. family), extrinsic (e. g. price) and intrinsic (e. g., taste).

### **Impact of Food Labeling**

Giving consumers information that could affect their purchasing decisions is the goal of food labeling. Consumers may inquire about food products contents, cooking instructions, storage recommendations, best-before or use by date, nutritional value and other nutritional information. The consumer can make a better decision if they are informed about the precise nature and qualities of the food product through clear, truthful and accurate labeling.

Food labels are considered as a vital component in food packaging for combating unhealthy diets and obesity. A study to assess the impact of food labeling on food choices and eating behavior, aimed to analyze the effectiveness of food labeling in improving the selection of healthier goods and decreasing calorie intake. The findings imply that nutrition labeling could be an effective way to empower people to choose healthier products. (Cecchini, M., & Warin, L., 2016). Latiff et al. (2016) conducted a study to validate the impact of food labels among Malaysian consumers using an extended theory of planned behavior model. In doing so, the study assessed the direct and indirect effect of food labeling on consumer intention to purchase or otherwise the food products of interest. Random sampling technique was adopted in selecting 2,014 consumers in Klang Valley, Malaysia. The results of the structural equation modeling supported the adequacy of proposed model. This study contributes to and extends the understanding of food labels and purchasing behavior, identifying the rationales for purchasing of food products with labels that contains information such as Halal logo ingredients and nutritive value.

**Informed Decision-Making:** Food label is a vital source of information. It assists consumers to take wise and thoughtful choices aligned with their food preferences and wellbeing. Trust between consumers and producers can be developed by providing clear and comprehensive

label on food products that develop transparency, directness and faith among consumers. Kumar, N., & Kapoor, S. (2017) conducted a study on impact of labels on purchase decisions of young consumers of an emerging market. The findings revealed that the young Indian customers value food labels and read them before making a final purchasing choice. In addition to pricing, young consumers rated all product features that had an impact on their health as extremely significant. Information on several significant product qualities can be broadly classified into two categories: "product specification" and "product quality." The ultimate decision to buy a product based on food labels differed greatly depending on the consumers' gender, age, eating habits, and residential location.

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**Nutritional Knowledge and Awareness:** Nutritional labeling significantly influences consumer purchasing behavior by assisting them switching from less healthy to healthier food products. It facilitates consumers to assess the nutrients contents in food products, aligning their preferences with nutritional goals. An attempt was made by Bandara et al. (2016) to identify the consumer opinions toward the nutritional value of foods and the essential nutritional labeling characteristics that consumers would consider when making a purchase. According to the findings of this study, the majority of respondents analyze labels while making purchase decisions in order to assess the suitability of food product for vegetarians, religious reasons, avoiding food related ailments and determining whether the item is organically farmed. Respondent's positive perspectives on the existence of food labels included knowing the expiry date, and the fact that it was a legal obligation. The majority of consumers are concerned about nutritional status. A significant proportion of respondents purchasing decisions are highly influenced by the level of monosodium glutamate.

Consumer opinions toward the nutritional value of foods are continuously evolving. In this context, food product labels play an important role in providing customers with accurate nutrition information. The purpose of this study was to identify essential nutritional labeling characteristics that consumers would consider when making a purchase. The ultimate goal

was to generate findings that provide essential information for food processors about customer behavior in terms of food nutritional elements and purchasing intentions.

**Warning Labels:** The use of warning labels can decrease demand for certain products, particularly in medium-low socioeconomic groups, indicating that labeling can influence consumer choices based on disclosed information. A research by Lie et al. (2021) regarding the impact of sugar sweetened beverage warning labels on consumer behaviors and intentions indicated that Sugar sweetened beverage warning labels were successful at discouraging customers from purchasing them. Graphics with health effect labels at the greatest influence. future research should identify the psycho social mechanism that relate sugar sweet and beverage warning to purchasing decisions recruit social economically divorce participants and conduct trials in naturalistic settings.

**Demographic Factors:** Demographic variables such as age, occupation, and income level impact awareness and preference for food labels, influencing purchasing decisions. Wahab, R.A. (2018) reported that consumer's response indicated a lack of understanding of reading of food labels. The majority of consumers read basic information such as manufacturing and expiry dates. In addition, they stated that the amount of fat and sugar were the most significant factors to consider when purchasing the product for the first time. Furthermore, Hoteit et al. (2022) conducted a survey in Lebanon to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) regarding food label and the result revealed that there was very low awareness about the importance of food labels among them. This caused them to choose unhealthy food options.

## **Conclusion**

From in depth review of literature it can be concluded that the study on the impact of food labeling on consumer purchasing behavior emphasizes the need of clear, accurate, and informative food labels in influencing customer decisions. According to the findings of several research studies, food labels can favorably influence customer decisions by raising nutritional awareness, encouraging better food choices, and fostering informed purchasing behavior. However, the success of food labels is inextricably linked to customers' comprehension, trust, and interest in the information presented. To maximize their impact, labeling systems must be straightforward, uniform, and backed by public education programs. To summarize, food labeling is a strong instrument that, when properly planned and executed, can encourage healthier eating habits and more mindful consumption patterns. A few research that indicate that nutritional labeling can encourage healthier consumption and

has a favorable impact on purchasing behavior also make this clear. The usage of nutritional information is the subject of more detailed survey results.

Food labeling is a powerful tool in shaping consumer purchasing decisions. By providing detailed nutritional information and promoting transparency, labels empower consumers to make healthier choices. However, the effectiveness of labeling can vary based on factors like socioeconomic status and demographic characteristics. Enhancing consumer awareness and education on food labeling is crucial for maximizing its impact on consumer behavior. A lot of work is needed to enhance consumer awareness about the nutrition aspects of reading food labels so that they can make the greatest healthy food choices possible.

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