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STUDENT CONSUMERS' DECISION-MAKING PROCESS REGARDING FOOD
PRODUCTS CONTAINING LIMITED LABEL INFORMATION

SE SCHUTTE

(B CONSUMER SCIENCES)

Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
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2 Corinthians 3:5

“and not because we think we can do anything of lasting value by ourselves, our only power and success comes from God”

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STUDENT CONSUMERS' DECISION-MAKING PROCESS REGARDING FOOD PRODUCTS CONTAINING LIMITED LABEL INFORMATION

SUMMARY

Many student consumers obtain food products with a limited amount of label information, namely limited label information products (LLIP), from cafeterias at university campuses. Since food labels serve as an information source during consumers' decision-making process, this study focused on the decision making process of student consumers when exposed to LLIP. Therefore, the objectives of this study were to determine the importance of label information to student consumers as well as the specific label information they regarded as important. Secondly, student consumers' decision-making process when confronted with LLIP was determined, while the results were thirdly applied to an existing decision-making process model.

A qualitative research approach was used to obtain information regarding student consumers' decision-making process when confronted with LLIP. The Klipoog Cafeteria of the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) was used as the study location. Students were questioned on their use of label information using semi-structured interviews as well as a vignette scenario, to determine their food purchase behaviour as well as their decision-making process when purchasing food products with limited label information.

The findings indicated that student consumers based their food purchase decisions on internal related strategies as well as product preferences when confronted with LLIP. Results on objective one was that specific minimum label information requirements were important to student consumers with a label interest, such as product and content information when searching for product information. Their search is influenced by physical factors (such as label information and product preference) and personal factors (healthiness and freshness) of the food product. Objective two determined the evaluation of LLIP alternatives and the results were based on product, label and personal related factors. This information was applied to an existing decision-making model to indicate

the decision-making process of student consumers when purchasing LLIP that was determined in objective three. The application of the model could be used by retailers and manufacturers to enable a better understanding of student consumers and allow them to cater for their specific needs. Retailers and manufacturers should ensure that food products are labelled according to the label regulations and specifications and supply university cafeterias with such products to ease the student consumers' decision-making process. Furthermore, if the student consumer could choose between food products with the correct label information, they could make healthier, more informed food choices and potentially live a healthier lifestyle.

STUDENTEVERBRUIKERS SE BESLUITNEMINGSPROSES TEN OPSIGTE VAN BEPERKTE INLIGTING OP VOEDSELPRODUK-ETIKETTE

OPSOMMING

Baie studenteverbruikers koop voedselprodukte met beperkte etiketinligting, vanaf wegneem eetplekke soos kafeterias op universiteitskampusse aan. Omdat voedsletikette dien as 'n bron van inligting gedurende die verbruiker se besluitnemingsproses, fokus die studie op die besluitnemingsproses van die studenteverbruiker wanneer hulle aan beperkte etiketinligting op voedselprodukte blootgestel word. Die doelstellings van die studie is om die belangrikheid van etiketinligting vir studenteverbruikers te bepaal asook die spesifieke etiketinligting wat hulle belangrik geag het. Tweedens is die studenteverbruikers se besluitnemingsprosesse wanneer hulle gekonfronteer word met beperkte etiketinligting bepaal, terwyl die resultate laastens toegepas is op 'n bestaande besluitnemingsmodel.

'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsstrategie is gebruik om inligting aangaande studenteverbruikers se besluitnemingsproses te bekom wanneer hulle gekonfronteer word met beperkte etiketinligting op voedselprodukte. Die Klipoog Kafeteria van die Noordwes Universiteit (Potchefstroom Kampus) is gebruik as studieomgewing. Die studenteverbruikers is gedurende semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude, asook deur middel van 'n vignette scenario ondervra oor hulle gebruik van etiketinligting gedurende hulle aankope van produkte met beperkte etiketinligting asook aangaande die invloed wat die beperkte inligting op hulle besluitnemingsproses het.

Die bevindinge het aangedui dat studenteverbruikers hulle voedsel aankoopbesluite op grond van interne verwante strategieë sowel as produkvoorkeure neem wanneer hulle met beperkte etiketinligting op voedselproduk-etikette gekonfronteer word. Die resultate van die eerste doelwit het aangedui dat spesifieke minimum etiketinligting vereistes belangrik was vir studenteverbruikers met 'n belangstelling in etiketinligting, soos inligting ten opsigte van die produk en bestanddele in die produk wanneer hulle opsoek was na produkinligting. Hulle soektog is ook beïnvloed deur fisiese faktore (soos etiketinligting

en produkvoorkeure) asook persoonlike faktore (gesondheid en varsheid) as deel van die studenteverbruiker se produk voorkeure. Die tweede doelwit het die evaluering van produkalternatiewe met beperkte etiketinligting bepaal waarvoor die resultate gebaseer was op produk, etiket en persoonlike faktore. Hierdie inligting is toegepas op 'n bestaande besluitnemingsmodel om die besluitnemingsproses wat studenteverbruikers volg aan te dui wanneer hulle produkte met beperkte etiketinligting aankoop wat deur middel van die laaste doelwit bepaal is. Hierdie toegepaste model kan deur kleinhandelaars asook vervaardigers gebruik word om sodoende die studenteverbruikers beter te verstaan en hulle in staat te stel om in die studente se spesifieke behoeftes te voorsien. Indien kleinhandelaars en vervaardigers aan die wetgewing en etiketspesifikasies voldoen, kan korrekte en spesifieke inligting op voedsletikette aan kafeterias voorsien word om studenteverbruikers se besluitnemingsproses te vergemaklik. Die studenteverbruiker kan dus deur die gebruik van korrekte nutrientinligting gesonder voedselkeuses maak en sodoende 'n potensieël gesonder lewenstyl handhaaf.

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ABBREVIATIONS

GI	Glycemic index
LLIP	Limited label information products
NIN	National Institute of Nutrition
NLEA	Nutrition Labelling and Education Act
SA	South Africa

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

A food label is a source of information that provides a product's name, features, uses, ingredients and price (Hawkins *et al.*, 1989:577) and is the one medium through which consumers can obtain information about the food product they consider purchasing (Wandel, 1997:212). However, in order for consumers to be able to use food labels in this context, they need to be understandable. Baltas (2001:712) mentioned that the consumer's decision-making process could be influenced while purchasing products, due to the difficulty that they experience during the interpretation of nutritional information on food labels. The importance of information on food products to consumers was also accentuated by Shine *et al.* (1997:290), stating that when consumers are fully informed about the features of the product, they are able to obtain optimal benefits from the product. Nevertheless, it is uncertain how incomplete or limited information on food labels will affect consumers' behaviour and decisions regarding food products.

For the purpose of this study limited label information products (LLIP) can be defined as a food product with a label containing a limited amount of product, brand, ingredient, nutritional and manufacturing information. LLIP found in South African food retail outlets can be categorized into four groups based on the amount of information found on the labels, namely those containing product name and price, product name and ingredients, brand and product name and brand name, product name and ingredients. Food products such as biscuits, pies, pastries, sausages and chips are popular items among student consumers (Coulson, 2000:663). Many of these products sold in student cafeterias are LLIP and were of interest to the present study.

Many young consumers have their own individual food preferences and consumption behaviour which will ultimately influence their decisions about what, when and where they eat (Brown *et al.*, 2000:230). A great number of consumers from student populations do their daily food purchasing at university cafeterias (Littrell, 2002:2;

Satia *et al.*, 2004:1089). Brown *et al.* (2000:231) also indicated that these consumers appear to have a higher tolerance for repetition than adults, as their daily food consumption mainly exists of the same convenience foods, such as hamburgers, chilidogs, fried chicken and pizza. Marquis (2005:55) conducted a study of unhealthy food choices among students living in residence at the University of Montreal, Canada. This study was done on their concept of convenience foods, their purchase motivation and consumption behaviour. It was evident that their search for convenience was the most important purchasing motivation, followed by the product price and their health and weight concerns (Marquis, 2005:55).

It is a well-known fact that the correct dietary habits could reduce consumers' risk of chronic diseases and improve their health (Baltas, 2001:708). Both heart disease and cancer are chronic diseases that have been linked to dietary factors such as fat and fibre intake (Smith *et al.*, 2000:75). In addition, high levels of total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol in diets are linked to increased blood cholesterol levels and the risk of heart disease (Anon., 2004:146). Smith *et al.* (2000:176) pointed out that young students do not believe that they are at risk of developing such chronic diseases. Thus, nutritional recommendations on labels are important tools to encourage students to eat food low in saturated fat and sugar, as well as a variety of fruits, vegetables and grains daily (Hsieh, 2004:83). Aspects such as the preparation of food, food low in fat and additives, as well as food low in sugar and salt are the aspects that need to be considered by consumers when composing a healthy diet (Wandel, 1997:216).

Student consumers' food label awareness is an unattended area of research globally and even though students follow unhealthy eating patterns from cafeterias, it is uncertain if this is the sole reason they would purchase LLIP. In addition, limited time, a busy schedule and the absence of meal planning were reasons why Canadian student consumers skip meals, prefer snacking and find healthy eating more difficult (Marquis, 2005:56). When student consumers progress from school to university, they have more freedom to select food according their own individual preferences. Consequently their food behaviour patterns are influenced through meals eaten outside the home within the university environment (Brown *et al.*, 2000:230). Thus the present study focused on determining the importance of food labelling to the

South African student consumers, as well as their decision-making process regarding LLIP.

1.1.1 The importance of food label information to student consumers

Research done by Brown *et al.* (2000:233) indicates that daily food consumption behaviour of student consumers is motivated by a range of influential factors from their homes, schools and their social environment. Furthermore, student consumers' independent characteristics form part of their daily food consumption patterns and are expressed in their food consumption behaviour. Marquis (2005:55) accentuated convenience as the primary motivation for college students' food purchases, while a busy schedule, the lack of time, the price of the product, pleasure, health and weight concerns also have a significant impact on the eating habits and food choices of student consumers.

A national nutrition survey done in Australia indicated that 90% of students consumed snacks during the mid morning or afternoon breaks, of which 39% were unhealthy snacks that contained high levels of fat, sugar and sodium (Hsieh, 2004:83). To aggravate this situation even further, Littrell (2002:2) found college students not to have regular meal schedules and that they eat non-hunger foods because they want distraction from their books.

Research from the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) in Canada conducted a segmentation analysis on consumers aged between 18 and 24 years. A large proportion of the sample consisted of a group named "too young to care" (NIN, 2002:1). Nutrition is not a key concern to this group, as they take their health for granted due to everyday pressure. Previous research (Marquis, 2005:55) indicated that student consumers are influenced through their independent characteristics and convenience orientated behaviour, but none of these studies focused on the importance of food labels to these consumers. Therefore, the challenge of the present study was to determine whether label information is important to student consumers when purchasing LLIP at a university's cafeteria.

1.1.2 The importance of food labelling in consumer decision-making

In the previous section the poor dietary habits of students were emphasized. The question can be asked whether food labelling can play a role to improve this situation. According to the 1990 Nutrition Labelling and Education Act (NLEA) that revised nutrition labels on packaged foods, this legislation's primary goal is to improve consumer welfare by providing nutrition information that will assist consumers in maintaining healthy dietary practices (NLEA, 1990:2). The new draft of the South African regulations relating to the labelling and advertising of foodstuffs (Act 54 of 1972) was submitted on the 20th July 2007 for any valid comments (SA, 2007:69). The aim of these regulations is to improve public health, as well as providing the consumer with reliable label information (Booyesen, 2007:55). A study from the USA indicated that nutritional information on food packages is designed to promote and protect public health in order for consumers to make informed dietary choices (Anon., 2004:146). Wandel (1997:212) stated that health considerations are consumers' most important motivation for reading food labels and that food labels should give consumers information about all the main ingredients, additives and condiments in their food.

For the purpose of the current study, label readers or users are defined as consumers who use the food label in their food purchasing decisions. Balasubramanian and Cole (2002:122) reported that label readers start to use nutritional information after they have become more health conscious. Non-users do not consider nutritional information important when they shop for "fun" or "bad" foods. Furthermore, factors such as age, gender, socio-economic status and knowledge of nutrition were indicated by research to influence the consumer's use of the nutrition information on labels (Shine *et al.*, 1997:291). Educated consumers have a better understanding of diet and disease related messages and have a more positive attitude towards health messages on food labels. According to research, they also tend to read food labels to a greater extent than the less educated (Geiger *et al.*, 1991; Wandel, 1997:212). However, none of these empirical studies looked at the specific use of food labels among university students. Therefore, the question remains whether food labels influence student consumers' food choices, as addressed in the present study.

1.1.3 The role of food labelling in consumers' decision-making process

When consumers are confronted with products containing inadequate information, they develop decision strategies and ways of reducing the risk to enable them to purchase these products with relative confidence (Kassarjian & Robertson, 1968:188). Yet there is no specific research indicating the importance of food labels to student consumers, nor about their concerns about the information on the label.

A study done at a Missouri State University indicated that students saw a food label as a useful tool, but the nutritional information on a food label plays a minor role throughout planning their diets, as they intended to use the food label information only with their first purchase of a specific product (Marietta *et al.*, 1999:448). Nevertheless, the consumer must take the food label information into consideration in order to make healthy food decisions and to obtain the different functions, characteristics, attributes and ingredients of the food product (Sijtsema *et al.*, 2002:572). In addition, the information on a food label reduces the uncertainty and creates product reliability for the consumer, while also generating a strong impact on the consumer's purchase decision (Silayoi & Speece, 2004:624).

The consumers' process of decision-making is complex during everyday cognition, since they have to process both their individual expectations and desires when engaging in the decision-making process (Palojoki & Tuomi-Gröhn, 2001:16). Consumer decision-making models are widely used in consumer behaviour and related areas of research to structure theory and research (Erasmus *et al.*, 2001:82-83). To understand the consumer decision-making process better, a simplified model of the consumer decision-making process is explained according to its five main stages. The first stage, problem recognition, is likely to occur when a consumer is faced with a problem or a need (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:555). Individual, environmental and psychological differences are recognized by Blackwell *et al.* (2001:84) as categories of variables that could influence the consumer's recognition of a need.

The second stage of the decision-making process is the search for information (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001:73). Bareham (1995:6) stated that sources such as the media, friends, relatives and word-of-mouth mostly help the consumer with unimportant purchases. Therefore, the consumer does not have to take the time and effort to find

out what different product options are available. The information search process was of critical importance for the present study, where the student consumer was confronted with limited information on food product labels.

The third stage of the consumer's decision-making process deals with the evaluation and examination of product alternatives and product labels (Erasmus *et al.*, 2002:79). The evaluation stage of the decision-making process is critical with accurate standards and specifications, because the consumer use and compares all the different product options and brands before making a final purchase decision (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001:76). Influencing factors, such as product dimensions, product preferences, as well as the consumer's motivation and attitude can influence the consumer's product evaluation process (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001:77). Erasmus *et al.* (2002:79) confirmed that before making a decision the consumer has to consider factors such as personal or social related goals when evaluating information on product labels. Therefore, the evaluation of alternatives should be a significant part of student consumers' decision-making process.

During the fourth stage of the decision-making process, the consumer purchases the product (Bareham, 1995:7). It was mentioned by Blackwell *et al.* (2001:79) and Erasmus *et al.* (2002:80) that the consumer could be influenced at this stage by the product and point-of-purchase displays, as well as electronic media. Blackwell *et al.* (2001:80) described stage five of the decision-making process as the outcome evaluation or post-purchase response stage. During this stage the consumer experiences a sense of product satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Erasmus *et al.*, 2002:80).

Although the outcome evaluation is important for the consumer's future decisions and purchasing behaviour, but for the purpose of the current study the researcher focused only on three stages of the student consumers' decision-making process, namely need recognition, search for information and evaluation of alternatives, which represents the process stage of the decision-making process, while the outcome of the decision was not considered in the present study, because it was the decision-making process and not the outcome of the decision that was of importance.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The nutritional information table is intended to enable the consumer to make an informed product choice (Baltas, 2001:708). A previous study by Marquis (2005:59) indicated that these convenience orientated students do not have a good perception of eating healthy; and therefore do not eat a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables in order to maintain a healthy diet. In addition consumers claim they would use the nutritional information on food labels but they seldom understand the nutritional information correctly (Shine *et al.*, 1997:290). Therefore the lack of label information on LLIP, or the misunderstanding of available label information could possibly complicate the information search stage of the decision-making process of student consumers. It becomes evident that research is needed to determine if and how student consumers' decision-making process is influenced through products with limited label information. Furthermore, the fact that South African university cafeterias stock LLIP makes the problem regarding consumers' decision-making process particularly relevant to student consumers who are shopping at cafeterias and confronted with LLIP. By conducting this study related to limited label information on food products at a South African university campus, it can be determined whether student consumers need more information on cafeteria food products in order to make better purchasing decisions. Insight from this research could be valuable to student consumers by assisting them into making healthier food decisions. It could enable a better understanding of the student consumers' decision-making process in this specific context, as well as facilitating the retailer to stock products according to student consumers' needs.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Aim

The aim of this study was to investigate student consumers' decision-making process regarding food products containing limited label information.

1.3.2 Objectives

To achieve this aim the following objectives were formulated:

- To determine the importance of label information to student consumers when purchasing products from the cafeteria and what information on the label they regarded as important;

- To determine student consumers' decision-making process regarding LLIP; and
- To apply an adapted version of an existing decision-making process model (need recognition, information search and evaluation of alternatives) to the results of the student consumers' decision-making process regarding LLIP.

1.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework in Figure 1.1 was used to determine what information on food labels contributes to the decision-making process of the student consumer when they are exposed to LLIP, when purchasing products in the cafeteria. This was done to determine the importance of label information to student consumers when purchasing from the cafeteria. During the first stage of the conceptual framework (input) student consumers are exposed to different LLIP categories. Each category consisted of the same product but with different types and quantities of information available on the product labels.

The importance of label information was confirmed in a study done by Levi *et al.* (2006:94) indicating that the correct food decisions promote a healthier lifestyle. Adequate information was found to enable the consumer to make informed food choices (Badham, 1998:44), and the nutrition facts label could guide the consumer in eating healthy as well as lowering their chances of developing heart disease or diabetes (Weir *et al.*, 2004:1538). LLIP will influence the student consumer when engaging into the stages of the decision-making process. Previous research found student consumers' motivation to purchase LLIP to be time limitations, a busy schedule (Marquis, 2005:56), skipping meals and preferring snacks (Hsieh, 2004:83), as well as the freedom to select any food (Brown *et al.*, 2000:230).

The second stage of the conceptual framework consists of the student consumers' decision-making process, focusing on the "process" as part of the decision-making model. The process consists of the student consumers' recognition of a problem or a need, search for information and evaluation of alternatives (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:554). The student consumers are confronted with LLIP during their search for information, as well as their evaluation of alternatives. The post-purchase response (output) of the conceptual framework will not be focused on in this study.

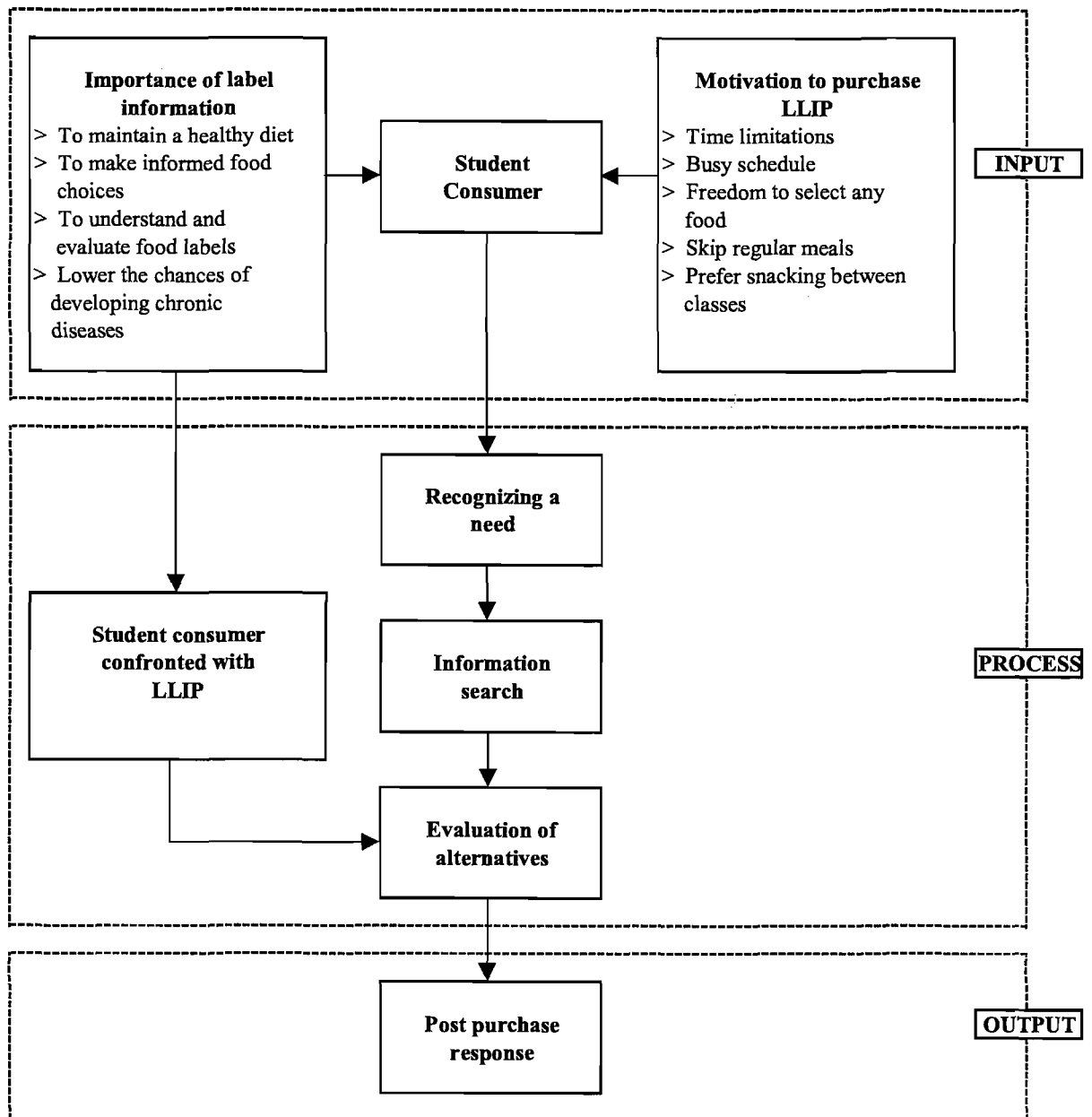


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of student consumers' proposed process of decision making (adapted from Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:554) when exposed to limited label information products.

1.5 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

Results of the study will contribute towards a better understanding of the decision-making process of student consumers regarding LLIP, helping student consumers to evaluate the efficiency of food product information, thereby encouraging better dietary habits as well as a healthier lifestyle. This study may also assist manufacturers and product developers to understand the importance of correct and sufficient information on food labels and apply the improved labels in the food industry. This study could also make a valuable contribution for educators through the implementation of educational programmes aimed at improving student consumers' eating by making use of food label information to improve healthy eating.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION

This mini-dissertation is presented in article format. Chapter 1 presents the background, motivation and problem statement of the study that highlights the student consumers' decision-making process on LLIP. Chapter 2 is presented in the format of a scientific article and provides an abstract, introduction, literature review, as well as the methodology followed in this study. The results, discussion and conclusion also form part of Chapter 2. The format, layout and referencing of this chapter were done according to the editorial prescriptions of the British Food Journal. In Chapter 3, the concluding chapter of this study, conclusions, implications and recommendations for future research are provided.

1.7 AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This study was planned and executed and reported by a team of researchers. The contribution of each researcher is provided in the following table:

Table 1.1: Authors' contribution to the study

Name	Role in the study
SE Schutte	Author, gathering of data, interpretation of data, descriptive analysis, literature research and preparation of this mini-dissertation.
Dr M van der Merwe	Study leader and co-author. Supervised descriptive analysis and interpretation of data. Supervised the writing of this mini-dissertation. Also conceived the theme of the study.
Dr H de Beer	Co-study leader and co-author. Supervised the writing of this mini-dissertation.

The following is a statement of the co-authors confirming their individual role in the study and giving permission that the article may form part of this mini-dissertation.

I declare that I have approved the above-mentioned article, that my role in the study, as indicated above, is representative of my actual contribution and that I hereby give my consent that it may be published as part of the Masters' mini-dissertation of Miss SE Schutte.

SE Schutte

Dr M van der Merwe

Dr H de Beer

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CHAPTER 2

Student consumers' decision-making process regarding food products containing limited label information

(Manuscript to be submitted for publication in the British Food Journal)

Student consumers' decision-making process regarding food products containing limited label information

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ABSTRACT

Student consumers' decision-making process regarding food products containing limited label information.

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Purpose

Since food labels serve as an information source during consumers' decision-making process, the study focused on the decision-making process of student consumers when exposed to limited label information products (LLIP).

Design/methodology/approach

A qualitative research approach was used to investigate the importance of food label information to student consumers as well as to obtain information regarding student consumers' decision-making process when confronted with LLIP. Students were questioned on their use of label information during their LLIP decision-making process.

Findings

The findings indicated that specific minimum label information requirements were important to student consumers with a label interest. Student consumers with a lack of label interest used time limitations and habitual food purchasing as their purchase motivations when faced with LLIP. Student consumers' also based their food purchase decisions on internal related strategies as well as product preferences when confronted with LLIP.

Research implications

The study contributes specific knowledge and understanding towards the use of label information and the potential of creating better eating behaviour on campuses and an overall healthier diet for young adults.

Practical implications

The findings of the study were applied to an existing decision-making model to indicate the decision-making process of student consumers when purchasing LLIP. Future research could be done on the input and output stages of the student consumers' decision-making process. Manufacturers could use this applied model for a better understanding of student consumers and allow them to cater for their specific needs complying with the food labelling regulations. This should also ease student consumers' decision-making process when doing food purchases.

Originality / Value

The application of the decision-making process model to student consumers' decision-making process purchasing limited label information products could potentially contribute towards improving students' diets, through educational programmes aimed at student consumers eating habits, assisting student consumers in making healthy food choices and living a healthy lifestyle.

Keywords: student consumer; decision-making; limited label information; food labels; healthy diet; South Africa

Type of paper: Research Paper

INTRODUCTION

Cafeterias at South African universities sell products such as fast foods and other prepared meals containing no or a very limited amount of label information. School cafeterias are no different, since a study done at a South African school cafeteria indicated that students buy energy dense food items that are high in fat and sugars and low in vitamins (Temple *et al.*, 2006). Student consumers tend to eat food bought at cafeterias or fast-food outlets and consequently their daily food intake is generally high in total saturated fat, sodium, sugars and energy (Satia *et al.*, 2004).

Nutrition information and dietary values on labels assist consumers to maintain a balance of good health (Davies and Smith, 2004). Previous research indicates that significant problems exist regarding the understanding and student consumers' use of nutritional information on labels (Brown *et al.*, 2000). Food labels aim to assist consumers to make easy and healthy food choices, guide the consumer to select food for their specific dietary needs and protect the consumer against false health claims (Van de Venter and Pentz, 1998). The majority of ready to eat-food-products without label information are offered in the cafeteria environment, and are a source of concern with respect to the unhealthy dietary habits of student consumers that were already mentioned. Thus, it becomes evident that research is needed to determine if and how the decision-making process of the student consumer is influenced through products containing limited label information (LLIP). For the purpose of this study LLIP can be defined as food products containing a limited amount product, brand, ingredient, nutritional and/or manufacturing information on the label.

The first objective of this qualitative study conducted at a South African University campus was, therefore, to determine whether label information is important to student consumers and what specific label information they regarded as important on the label. Through this objective it was also determined whether student consumers read and use food labels. The second objective was to determine student consumers' decision-making process regarding LLIP, as well as whether these consumers need more information on a product label in order to make a purchasing decision. The last objective was to apply an existing decision-making process model (need recognition, information search and evaluation of alternatives) according to the results of the student consumers survey regarding LLIP, in order to determine the factors that affect and complicate the student consumers' decision-making process. The insight obtained from the research could be used to sensitise role players in the food chain towards student consumers' needs and would also contribute to a better understanding of student consumers' purchasing decisions when confronted with limited or incomplete label information.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The importance of food labelling in consumer decision-making

A study done on Australian consumers' perceptions of food labels, indicated that food label information assists consumers in making food choices (Kriflik and Yeatman, 2005). Consumers indicated that they consult food labels when they are not familiar with a product and they search for the nutritional information to obtain an idea of the product quality and determine whether they could benefit from the product (Deliza *et al.*, 2003). Nutritional information enables the consumer to make informed food choices and if consumers understand and use food labels correctly, they will be

able to maintain a healthy diet (Cotugna and Vickery, 1998; Baltas, 2001). When the consumer maintains a healthy lifestyle and eating habits, it can lower the risk of developing cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity and certain cancers (Smith *et al.*, 1999), as these diseases have been linked to dietary factors such as high fat and low fibre intake as well as insufficient fruit and vegetable consumption (Satia *et al.*, 2004).

Consumers make use of the nutrition information for different reasons, such as a healthier lifestyle, following a low fat diet or evaluating the cholesterol levels of the product by calculating the amount of total fat on the label. (Shine *et al.*, 1997). Macanda (2005) indicated that the new draft of food labelling regulations would decrease any misleading information on food labels in order to protect consumers. However, consumers' use of food labels is influenced by the circumstances under which the food is purchased. Zarkin and Anderson (1992) pointed out that the correct information is prescribed by food labelling regulations in order to provide usable labels to the consumer as well as improving public health (Rodolfo and Nayga, 2000).

Due to the importance of food labelling as a source of consumer information and the relevance thereof in public health improvement, South African consumers were provided with the new draft of food labelling regulations (R642) promulgated on 20 July 2007, to clarify certain issues about the current regulations on the advertising and labelling of foodstuffs R2034 (SA, 2007). These new regulations are aimed to reduce any ambiguity in the existing regulations (R2034 of 1993) and will provide guidance to different role players in the food industry (Booyesen, 2007). The main aim of the new regulations is to improve health awareness through a control of label information according to the Department of Health (Booyesen, 2007). Label information is used as

part of a strategy to prevent obesity and aims to assist the consumer with honest, accurate and reliable information to make informed choices about healthier food options. The revised regulations are set in place to protect the consumer because misinformation, especially on health claims, often used as a marketing tool, misleads and confuses uninformed consumers and will be regulated under the new regulation (SA, 2007). These regulations are also relevant for the present study to ensure that student consumers get correct and trustworthy label information and in assisting them to make correct product decisions.

The importance of food label information to student consumers

Student consumers' unhealthy eating habits have received a large amount of attention in recent years, as the food eaten away from home is consumed at fast-food establishments, such as cafeterias (Marietta *et al.*, 1999; Davies and Smith, 2004; Kolodinsky *et al.*, 2007). Fast foods are generally high in total saturated fat and energy (Brown *et al.*, 2000; Satia *et al.*, 2004; Bryant and Dundes, 2005). De Bate *et al.* (2001) indicated that 74% of college students do not eat five servings of fruit and vegetables per day and that 22% of college students eat three or more high fat foods during the day. Results from another study done at the University of Vermont, USA, confirmed that only one third of students eat from the recommended number of the five major food categories (Kolodinsky *et al.*, 2007). These unhealthy eating habits of student consumers contributed to the necessity of a study of their decision-making process regarding food products.

Results from a study by Marietta *et al.* (1999) done at Southeast Missouri State University, USA, amongst undergraduate students, indicated that all students strongly

agreed that a food label is a useful tool when purchasing food items. The results also revealed that 70.2% of the students sometimes look at the nutritional facts on the food label. In a survey conducted by Abbott (1997) in the United Kingdom, more than half of the sample population wanted more detail on food labels and it could be argued that a food label is one medium through which consumers can acquire knowledge about the food they consider buying (Wandel, 1997).

Lindley (2007) found that a lack of information, such as the price of the product might result in a negative response. In addition data from a pilot study done in Norway indicated that the lack of information on a food label was also a source of uncertainty in the food market (Wandel, 1997). Another survey done through the Public Understanding of Biotechnology Programme and Human Science Research Council revealed that 23% of South African consumers read food labels regularly compared to 51% that rarely or never read food labels (Macanda, 2005). According to the study mentioned above, if only 23% of consumers use food labels during their food purchases some student consumers like other consumer groups might consider other factors during their purchase decisions. In addition it is unknown how the consumer, that rarely reads a food label will respond, when confronted with a lack of information on a food product label. Products in student cafeterias that are of particular interest to the present study have limited information on product labels. Most of these products found in student cafeterias or fast food outlets are sandwiches, hamburgers and chicken pieces (De Bate *et al.*, 2001; Satia *et al.*, 2004; Davies and Smith, 2004).

The role of food labeling in consumers' decision-making process

Decision-making can be defined as the cognitive process where information is gathered from a selection of multiple alternatives or preferences, compared in the mind of the consumer before making a purchase (Walters and Bergiel, 1989). Dimara and Skuras (2005) stated that labelling is a powerful quality signal and directly supports consumers in making purchase decisions.

In the present study the process of the decision-making model (Figure 1, page 35) of Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) was used as a guideline to determine what information on food labels contribute to the decision-making process when student consumers are exposed to LLIP, as no existing models regarding LLIP or student consumers are available in the literature. The model consists of a combination of cognitive and emotional aspects of the consumer decision-making process, while it is also divided into three stages, namely input, process and output (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004). The process stage of the decision-making model consisted of the need recognition, search for information and the evaluation of alternatives. The input and output of the model will be discussed but not applied to the present study, since it was the decision-making process and not the outcome that was important to this study.

The first component (input) of the decision-making model consists of the external influences on the consumers decision-making process, such as the firm's marketing efforts which are product, promotion and price related (Erasmus *et al.*, 2002). Kahn and McAlister (1997) confirmed that the socio-cultural environment consists of a range of non-commercial influences, such as word-of-mouth from a friend or family member as well as information sources, such as an editorial in the newspaper or a group discussion on the internet. Brown *et al.* (2000) also confirm

that daily food purchasing behaviour of the student consumer appears to be motivated by a range of influential factors from the environment.

The student consumer's process of decision-making starts when recognising a need. Blackwell *et al.* (2001) defined need recognition as the process when the consumer senses a problem or a need, or if a consumer has a desire to purchase a certain product. Kandiah *et al.* (2006) confirmed that 33% of college women are making unhealthy eating decisions when they are stressed since they base their decision on an emotional need. After the student consumer recognizes a need, the information search or search for the correct product to purchase (second component) begins (Wilkie, 1994).

The information search depends on the consumer's ability to perceive and process information (Dimara and Skuras, 2005). Blackwell *et al.* (2001) identified that an internal search consists of knowledge from memory or previous purchases and an external search includes information from friends or relatives. Therefore, the information search process is of critical importance for the present study, where the student consumer was confronted with LLIP which enabled the researcher to determine their information search process with regard to LLIP.

The evaluation of alternatives occurs when the consumer evaluates the product attributes by making comparisons between competitive products (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001) and brands, and at the same time seeking benefits from the specific product (Puth *et al.*, 1999). Consumer's evaluation of alternatives can be influenced through psychological drives (Erasmus *et al.*, 2002). Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) also

indicated that environmental factors such as culture or social class have an internalised effect on how consumers evaluate products and ultimately choose or eliminate products. In the present study where the student consumer was faced with a food product with inadequate information on the label, they had to consider other factors such as internal related strategies as well as product preferences in order to make a purchase decision.

The third component (output) of the decision-making model consists of the purchase behaviour and post purchase evaluation of a consumer (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004). Consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the purchase can influence the process of consumers' decision-making for future purchases. The discussed decision-making model (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004) will be used to structure the research and to better understand the decision-making process of student consumers when confronted with LLIP.

METHOD

Research design

A qualitative research design was used in this study to investigate the importance of food label information to student consumers, as well as their decision-making process regarding LLIP. This research approach was chosen as qualitative research describes patterns of human behaviour expressed in a social group (Denscombe, 2003). As part of this research design, an exploratory and descriptive approach was followed. Delport and Fouché (2002) recommended such a combination, as it describes the research subject accurately, which helped the researcher to gain insight into student consumers' situation as well as a deeper meaning of the research phenomenon.

To the knowledge of the researcher, no research has been done on the subject of LLIP using student consumers as participants. This inspired the use of an exploratory research approach where the researcher developed new themes, concepts and sub-concepts after interpreting the data (Du Plessis and Rousseau, 1999). As a new field was entered new themes and concepts were obtained from the group of participants. This study also followed the phenomenological approach that provided the researcher with a description of the social and psychology perceptions (Huyshamen, 1993), as viewed and experienced by the participants involved.

Sampling

The study population was undergraduate male and female students, aged 19 to 23 years, from the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus. Students using the Student Centre's cafeteria in between classes on a daily basis for food purchases were targeted as participants for this study. The sample consisted of undergraduate students that entered the cafeteria and comply with the above criteria. The student consumers were observed as they entered the cafeteria in order for the researcher to identify those paying attention to LLIP labels, packagings or those who were browsing around before making a decision about a specific LLIP. These participants were not required to have purchased a food product.

A purposive and non-probability sampling process was followed. Strydom and Venter (2002) described purposive sampling as a representative portion of the population that are most likely to produce valuable data for the research project and it best represented the participants' characteristics (May, 1993). Denscombe (2003) describes non-probability sampling as an informative method to be used as sampling method in a new field with little research done such as in the case with LLIP. After observing the student consumers, the participants were handpicked according to the researcher's judgement as suggested by Rubin and Babbie (1993).

Data collection

The researcher approached the students for voluntary participation after consent was given. Each student had to complete an informed consent form, providing them with information about the research and ensuring confidentiality when participating in the study (Silverman, 2005). Data was collected by means of semi-structured

interviews, as well as a vignette scenario to obtain rich data about the student consumers' experiences and opinions (Jeffries and Maeder, 2005). Both these types of interviews were conducted in a room next to the cafeteria in the Student Centre, to allow the participants to feel relaxed in a quiet, private room without disturbances. The interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the participants. Field notes were also taken to ensure that data were captured accurately and to help the researcher to attend carefully to what was being said (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). A pilot study was conducted prior to the main study in order to test the applicability of the questions and to make modifications (Strydom and Delport, 2002b) to the interview guide used in the semi-structured interviews and the vignette scenario. Different participants were recruited to participate in the semi-structured interviews and the vignette scenarios. Sampling was the same for both these types of data collection.

Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews consisted of open-ended questions in the form of an interview guide that was based on the objectives of the study in order to guide the researcher through the interview. This technique was ideal for the study because it allowed the researcher to understand (Hannabuss, 1996) the student consumers' interpretation of limited product information when faced with LLIP. The following open-ended-questions were under discussion: "What type of information on a product label is important to you?" and "How do you choose the correct product in the cafeteria?" A total of 36 semi-structured interviews were conducted, each taking about twenty minutes, at which point the amount and diversity of new information

was evaluated in order to know whether data saturation was reached (Strydom and Delport, 2002a).

Vignette

Hayes (2002) described the vignette as an in-depth and insightful method that captures the experiences and behaviour of participants. A vignette makes it possible for the researcher to capture and summarise the participants' daily environment in such a way that the relevant features were still highlighted and could be discussed (Barter and Renold, 2000). The researcher showed the participants a vignette scenario of 200 words describing a situation characteristic to the cafeteria. The vignette scenario was carefully designed to obtain rich and focused responses from participants (Schoenberg and Ravdal, 2000). The vignette explained that a student was entering the cafeteria in the Student Centre looking for something nutritious to eat, but that all the products in the display fridges had insufficient information on the labels. For example, there was no expiry date on the take-away salad. Lastly the student took a product with only a product name on the label.

After reading the vignette the participants were asked to visualise their actions if they were in a similar situation. Open-ended questions were formulated beforehand (Rubin and Babbie, 1993) regarding the vignette scenario. The researcher followed the question guide where the questions under discussion were: "If you want nutritious food but the products don't have labels, what will you do?" and "What will influence your decision-making process if you have to decide between different limited label information products?" For each participant the questions on the specific topic

continued for half an hour. Data saturation occurred when 21 vignette scenarios were completed.

Each participant was rewarded with an incentive as a sign of appreciation. The researcher continuously studied and evaluated the data collected to ensure that the direction in which the data leads the researcher was correct as suggested by Charmaz (1995).

Data analysis

All the tape recordings were organised and transcribed verbatim to make sure that the meaning and understanding of the data remained correct and captured the interaction between the researcher and participant (Potter and Wetherell, 1995). The twenty-six pages of the transcripts were compared with the field notes to ensure that the data were transcribed accurately as suggested by O'Connell and Kowal (1995). The researcher translated the statements of the participants accurately from Afrikaans to English, to ensure that the original meanings of the participants' statements were preserved. These translations were checked for accuracy by another researcher. Data analysis was conducted through a process of open-coding. Smith (1995) stated that the process of coding guides the researcher to extract meaning from the data in a systematic way, uncovering patterns, concepts, categories and themes. The coding also facilitates the organisation of notes and quotations by sorting and reorganising the data without changing the original data (Holm and Kildevang, 1996). In addition coding also helps the researcher to analyse the core content of the data to determine which of the data are significant (Patton, 2001). Therefore, the researcher was able to

structure the data according to the objectives of the study bringing meaning to the research as advised by De Vos (2002).

Trustworthiness

Silverman (2005) described the quality of qualitative research as the insurance that the researcher used the correct procedures, reliable methods and that the conclusions are valid. Therefore, the trustworthiness of this research was insured across four proposed constructs, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Krefting, 1991) in combination with the model of Lincoln and Guba (1985). This method ensured the truth and consistency of the study. Table 1 provides a summary of the constructs applied to the data in order to obtain trustworthiness.

Ethical considerations

As mentioned, all participants were required to complete a consent form to indicate that they were informed about the study and that their participation was voluntary (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Rubin and Babbie, 1993). The informed consent form contained the goal of the investigation, procedures as well as the possible advantages and disadvantages of the research project, as indicated by Strydom (2002). Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the North-West University (reference code 04k11).

Table 1: Strategies to ensure trustworthiness during the study

Strategy	Criteria	Application
Credibility	Field experience	A pilot study was performed to explore the research setting. Thirty-six semi-structured interviews were conducted. Twenty-one students participated in the vignette scenario. Half an hour was spent with the participants to allow them to express their views regarding limited label information products.
	Reflexibility	The researcher compared field notes to the audio recordings and transcribed data.
	Triangulation	Semi-structured interviews and vignettes were used as data collection methods. Data collection by means of verbatim transcriptions and field notes which were compared throughout data analysis. Verbatim transcripts were quoted in the results. Concepts, categories and themes were identified and argued by the researcher within theoretical boundaries. No specific literature was available on limited label information products, but literature control on food labelling and consumer decision-making took place throughout the study.
	Member checks	Field notes were discussed with participants to ensure that the field notes corresponded with their opinions.
	Peer debriefing/review	Raw data were analyzed and discussed with the study leaders and co-authors as well as other researchers.
	Data collection techniques	A pilot study was done to explore the use of semi-structured interviews and the vignette scenario.
Transferability	Selection of sample	Purposive sampling was used, recruiting participants displaying interest in information on product labels.
	In-depth description	A description of the methodology and results were accompanied by the verbatim quotations.
Dependability	Dependability audits	Detailed analysis of themes and concepts controlled by experienced researchers.
	Dense description	Thorough description of the methodology was used in the research.
	Triangulation	Thirty-six semi-structured interviews were conducted and twenty-one participated in the vignette scenarios. The researcher used an open-coding method.
	Peer examination	Frequent discussions with co-authors regarding methodology, findings and data analysis.
	Question guide	Each participant was interviewed according to the same question guide.
Conformability	Conformability	All records and transcripts were kept.
	Reflexibility	Field notes were made and used for data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the present study explain how student consumers made use of label information through their decision-making process when confronted with limited label information on cafeteria products. Results were discussed according to the objectives of the study that were addressed by the questions asked to consumers during the semi-structured interviews and the vignette scenario.

The importance of label information to student consumers

To achieve objective one, the participants were asked how they select products at the cafeteria, during the semi-structured interviews. This question was asked to determine whether label information was important to them when selecting products from the cafeteria without prompting them about label information. The participants had two decision-making strategies when faced with LLIP, namely their internal and product related strategies that were identified as themes.

Theme: Internal related strategies

The first theme, identified as internal related strategies was divided into two categories, namely purchase motivations and personal motivations. When the participants were confronted with LLIP, different concepts evolved within their purchase motivation. *Purchase motivations* included decisions made before they went to the cafeteria (“I know what I want beforehand, otherwise I am in the queue too long”) or decisions based on previous product consumption (“I will take something that tastes nice and that I have eaten before”). Some participants also used brand loyalty as a motivation for their purchase (“a product’s brand name makes a contribution to my decision”). In addition participants expressed their label

insensitivity (“labels do not influence me”) as a purchase motivation. According to Levi *et al.* (2006), male students lacked interest in product labels as a result of low involvement during food purchase decisions, while female students gave more attention to food labels owing it to weight and health consciousness. As reflected in the present study some student consumers did not find label information important during their purchase decisions. Participants indicated a low interest in label information, possibly since they do not experience these food purchases as high risk items. Solomon (2004) confirmed that consumers have a low interest in label information when purchasing low risk items.

A second category, namely *personal motivations*, also emerged from the theme internal related strategies. Most of the participants in the present study depended on their product preference, product needs, product taste (“I will make my decision based on what tastes the best”) and other people’s influence (“today my friend influenced me to buy the carrot and nut muffin”) as personal motivations as a reaction to LLIP offered at the cafeteria. Participants built their product preference on aspects such as the healthiness of food (“I like chicken, it is a healthy meal”) and low fat foods (“I will take something that is the least fattening”). This observed health awareness is in contrast with a study done by Hsieh (2004) where it was recorded that eating habits of students consist of unhealthy snack food and were influenced through their social and physical environment, and formed part of their eating behaviour. The product needs of some participants in the present study were based on a certain desire (“I will take the product for which my desire is”) as well as personal circumstances (“I will take a muffin because I am stressed and have not eaten breakfast”). A study done by Palojoki and Tuomi-Gröhn (2001) also indicated that traditions and eating habits of

consumers had a strong influence on their food choices. Societal influences and skills developed during childhood, such as healthy eating habits, contribute towards consumers in making healthier food choices (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004).

The above-mentioned personal motivations form part of the need recognition stage of the decision-making model applied to in the present study (Figure 1). Through this study it became evident that when some students experienced a need or desire such as hunger and were then confronted with LLIP, they based their decisions upon their internal related strategies.

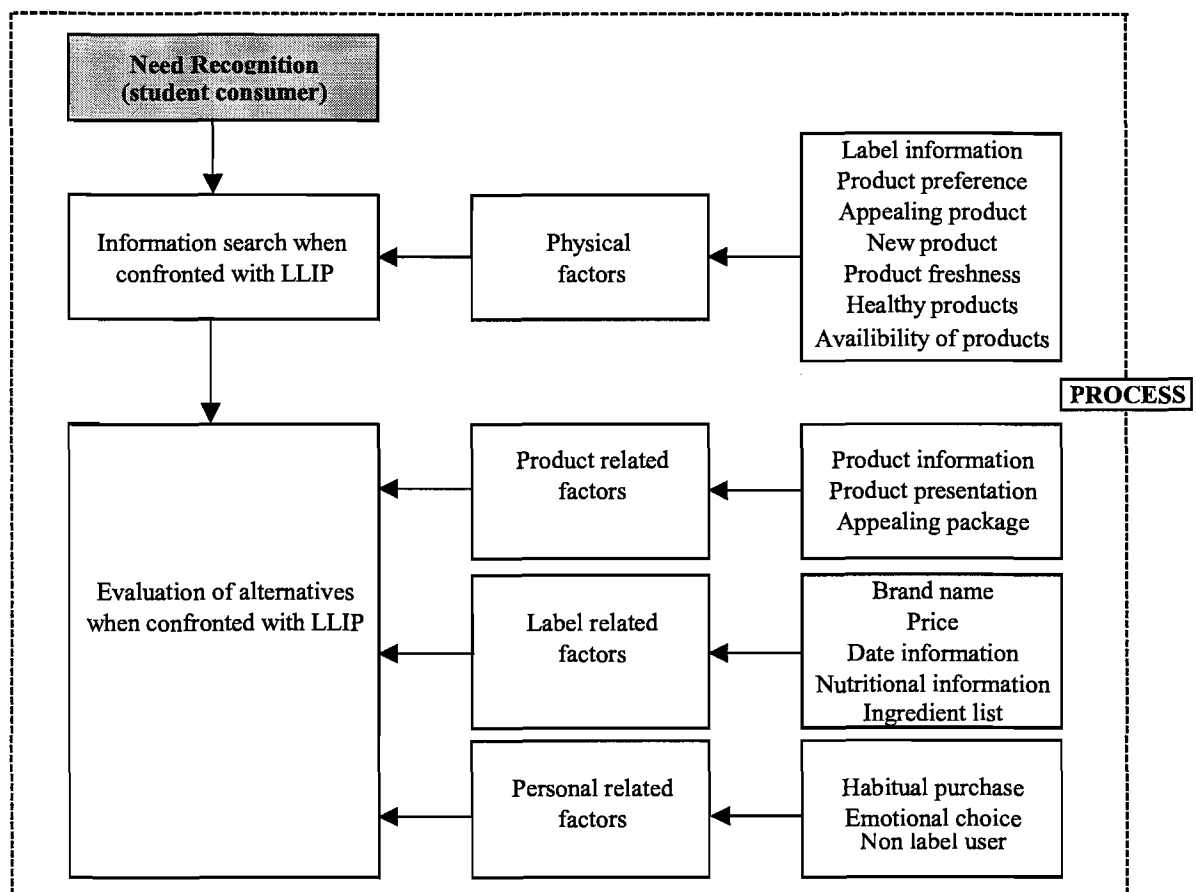


Figure 1: Application of the decision-making process to student consumers' purchasing of limited label information products (adapted from Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004).

Theme: Product related strategies

The second theme indicated that the participants chose products from the cafeteria using product related strategies. This theme was addressed through ***product motivations*** as a category. Many participants of this study indicated that they based their decisions on the appearance of the product label and packaging (“I like a picture on a product label, then you can see what the product looks like”), label information (“I am looking at the ingredients, if the product is healthy or not” and “I have to eat the basic nutrients, like vitamins and protein”); and the product price (“I would rather take a muffin for five rand”). These concepts correspond with data from Silayoi and Speece (2004) who state that the consumers’ decision-making is greatly influenced by visual elements of a product.

Some participants further indicated an awareness for new products (“I like to try out new products but it depends on my state of mind”) as a product motivation. Silayoi and Speece (2004) pointed out that consumer decisions are purely made on liking when purchasing low involvement products, which means that consumers purchase products that reflect their image or state of mind. The unprompted awareness of participants regarding label information became evident in this study since no information on food labels were mentioned when the semi-structured interview (“How do you select products from the cafeteria?”) had been taking place with the participants. Consumers’ unprompted awareness of food labels is recognised as the participants’ ability to recall immediately and clearly a food label element which measures recognition (“more on top of mind elements”) and that are related to other food label elements (ANZFA, 2002). The first objective of this study was to determine the importance of label information to student consumers. Some

participants in the present study indicated through their unprompted awareness that they are not satisfied with limited label information on labels. Only complete label information such as a picture on the label, the ingredient list and nutrition information could influence their purchase decisions.

Specific label information regarded as important by student consumers

The second part of objective one was also determined during the semi-structured interviews where the participants were asked what specific information they regarded as important on a food label when purchasing products from the cafeteria. Where the first question did not mention label information to the participants, this question prompted the participants regarding label information to determine what information on a product label they regarded as important when purchasing from the cafeteria. The themes revealed from the analysed results, two groups of student consumers existed, namely those with a *label interest* and those with *no label interest*. It was found at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada, in a study population consisting of undergraduate students, that label users outnumbered the non-label users (Smith *et al.*, 1999).

Theme: Student consumers with label interest

Important information identified by participants with a label interest covered the broad spectrum of *product content* and *manufacturing information* normally shown on food labels. In the present study, label information such as the product name (“the most important information on a label is the name of the product”) was an important factor to the participants because most of the LLIP in the cafeteria only have the name of the product on the label. Furthermore, most of the participants indicated that the product content (“I would like the ingredients on the sandwich”)

and nutritional value (“I always read the labels, especially the nutritional information on the back of the package”) were important to them. Reasons for the choice given by participants indicated that they read label information to obtain more information about the product, such as the fat, kilojoules, carbohydrate and protein content. According to Weir *et al.* (2004), the availability of nutritional information on food labels enables consumers to make healthy and informed purchase decisions. The consumer perceives and processes the information in obtaining a nutritional picture from the label and the content (Davies and Smith, 2004). In addition these participants of the present study with a label interest also mentioned the price, preparation and expiry dates. Mann *et al.* (2002) confirmed that because student consumers are limited to a food budget, price information is the most important information that they can use during their purchase decisions.

ANZFA (2002) defined the noticing of labels as prompted awareness and as an appropriate mental task that measures recognition of a food label through using label illustrations. During the present study the researcher used prompted awareness during the semi-structured interviews by reminding the participants about label information when talking about it (*What type of information on a product label is important to you?*). It is clear that label information used by participants with label interest corresponded with the product related strategy (ingredients and nutritional information) that participants use when making a purchase decision. However, during the prompted awareness exercise the participants were able to recall more specific label information than with the unprompted awareness. Still, nutritional information was only important to some of the consumers with a label interest in the present study, stressing the need for nutritional education to student consumers.

Theme: Student consumers with no label interest

The second group of participants indicated a low priority or no interest in food labels. The data revealed that participants focused on *physical* and *personal related* reasons for their purchasing behaviour. According to the results the participants relied entirely on the product information such as the packaging (“I don’t read the information on a label, I am focused on what the packaging looks like”), the freshness and quality (“it is about the freshness and quality of the product”), as well as the availability (“I will take a product with only a name on, if it is the only product available”) of products as physical related reasons.

Some participants further indicated that they used various personal related reasons, such as product knowledge (“I will buy the sandwich because I know the ingredients on it”) to make their purchase decisions. Time limitations (“I don’t have time to read labels, it is about what you see”) and declarations that label information was not important to them were also made (“the ingredients and the nutritional value is not important to me”) as personal related reasons. Marquis (2005) confirmed that student consumers’ eating habits and food choices are influenced through their tight time schedule, convenience foods and lack of time to prepare a meal at home. This was especially true for the student consumers with a disinterest in label information, whereas those with an interest in label information had some label information requirements, as mentioned before.

Student consumers' decision-making process regarding limited label information products

To achieve objective two the student consumers' decision-making process regarding limited label information were investigated. The process phase of the students' decision-making process consisted of three stages namely need recognition, information search and evaluation of alternatives.

Need recognition

With regard to the need recognition stage of the decision-making process, student participants indicated the following reasons (needs) for purchasing LLIP from the cafeteria: hunger, (because they did not have breakfast or they wanted something to snack on between classes), they are stressed, busy studying for the examinations or they did not have time to prepare food at home during lunchtime (Figure 1). It is clear from the present study that the student participants used personal motivations (internal related strategy) such as their product needs, taste, preference and in addition other people's influence when entering the cafeteria for their food purchases, as discussed earlier.

Information search

During the vignette scenario the student participants were asked what would influence their decision making process when making a decision between different LLIPs. This was done to reveal their information search phase of the decision-making process. Dimara and Skuras (2005) found that food labelling is an important source of information and that without the correct label information, the consumers' search

for information and product quality will be complex. There was only one theme identified from the information search stage.

Theme: Information search based on physical factors

The data obtained from the student participants revealed that information was searched on the food label based on physical related factors. Although the label information on LLIP is incomplete, this incomplete information still forms part of the student participants' information search, apart from other physical related factors such as new or appetising products. As shown in Figure 1, the physical factors that student participants used were experimenting with new products, product preferences, visually appealing products and label information. The importance of label information was emphasised by student participants through sub-concepts such as nutritional information ("I have to look for the nutritional value on the products"), preservatives ("sometimes I want to know if there are preservatives in a product"), energy content (I read labels for the kilojoules content, I want to see if the product will make me fat"), low GI status ("the label must state that the sandwich is low GI"), and allergens ("I am allergic to some ingredients"). Concerning these sub-concepts, it was positive to find that student participants considered the content of the food products important through their information search, since it was already mentioned that student consumers tend to make unhealthy food choices. Furthermore some student participants' product preferences even included healthy products ("if I want something healthy, I will buy a brown bread sandwich"), while product freshness ("I don't look for brand names, therefore, the product has to be fresh") and the availability of products ("it depends on what products are available") were also mentioned.

Lindley (2007) indicated that the comparison of insufficient, uncertain and complex information would cause information asymmetry to the consumer. Therefore, the consumer would find it difficult to make a purchase decision. As reflected in the present study due to insufficient information available to the student participants, they used physical factors throughout their information search, thereby experiencing a more complex decision-making process.

Evaluation of alternatives

The next step of the decision-making process, evaluation of alternatives, was determined through semi-structured interviews, by asking the participants how they will choose between the same type of food products, but with different types of limited label information on. Three themes emerged from the data namely product related, label related and personal related factors (Figure 1).

Theme: Evaluation of alternatives based on product related factors

Product related factors that influenced the participants decision-making process were addressed through concepts such as a specific product (“If I know the product I will just take it”), product presentation (“I think the packaging of a product is important, it helps you to see if the product is still fresh”), product size (“I will take the biggest muffin”), a new product (“If I am not sure about a new product I will read the label”) and appealing package (“I will take the muffin because the package is colourful and attractive”). It is clear that there is a link between the information search and evaluation of alternatives of some student participants that rely on the appealing product package and product presentation as product related factors during their decision-making process. It can be argued that the student consumers with no

interest in label information will be more inclined to use product related factors when confronted with LLIP as information source during evaluation of the product alternatives.

Theme: Evaluation of alternatives based on label related factors

The theme of label related factors was based and expressed through concepts such as brand name (“I will take the brownie because it is a known brand, I feel comfortable buying the brand”), price information (“I don’t look at the expiry date on a product, the price is important to me”), nutritional information (“I always look at the fat percentage on a product label”) and ingredient information (“If the product looks nice but the label states garlic, I won’t buy it”). These results implied that label information was one important factor that influenced student consumers’ evaluation of LLIP alternatives. It became evident that some student consumers read and use label information as a physical factor during their information search as well as during their evaluation of alternatives and that it will consequently influence their decision-making process regarding LLIP.

Theme: Evaluation of alternatives based on personal related factors

Lastly the personal related theme was divided into three concepts. The first concept was the student participants who do not use label information due habitual purchasing (“I will take a product that I know and have eaten before”). Habitual purchasing as a personal related factor is also compatible with the data from the first objective where student participants’ purchase motivations (internal strategy) were indicated to be based on their previous product experience, pre-purchase decisions and brand loyalty. Emotional choice (“If I don’t know what I want, I will take

something I have a desire for”) was the second concept that the student participants used during their evaluation of alternatives based on personal factors and thirdly, the student participant as the non-label reader (“Information on a label does not worry me, I don’t read it”) re-emerged. Student participants as non-label readers once again indicated no interest in label information.

Application of student consumers’ response to LLIP to the consumer decision-making process

To determine objective three, the process of the decision-making model adapted from Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) was applied to the results of the student consumers’ decision-making process regarding LLIP (Figure 1). The purpose of the applied model was to understand the factors that affect and complicate the student consumers’ decision-making process, as well as explaining their purchasing decisions when confronted with limited label products in the cafeteria environment.

Through analysing the student consumers’ decision-making process, it is clear that the process started when they were faced with a variety of convenience and ready-to-eat products including LLIP at the cafeteria. The student consumers’ need recognition as first stage of their decision-making process is generally regarded as the stage that initiates the purchase decision. In the present study it occurred when the student consumer realised their need for a specific product, a product of preference (“I will take a brown bread sandwich without butter) or a specific product taste (“I will make my decision on what tastes best”). During the second stage of the model, the student consumers’ search for information was based upon information that was provided through the display, freshness, sell by dates, price and packaging of the

products. Several physical factors that provided the student participants with visual (appealing product, new product, product freshness and availability of products) and information elements (label information, product preference and healthy products) were used during their information search in the cafeteria environment.

During the third stage, evaluation of alternatives, the student consumers' decision-making process was strained through the lack of label information and, therefore, product related (information, presentation, appealing package), label related (brand name, price, date information, nutritional information, ingredients) and personal related (habitual purchase, emotional choice, non-label user) factors were used as methods of evaluating product alternatives when purchasing LLIP. As indicated in the literature review, the evaluation of alternatives is a critical stage during the student consumers' decision-making process for the reason that the consumer considers different product criteria and product preferences to solve their decision-making problem (Du Plessis, 1994). Some of these factors correspond with the physical factors used during the student consumers' information search.

CONCLUSION

Through this research it became clear that the student consumers either use or do not use food labels to gain information with regard to LLIP purchases. The student consumers with a label interest will use label information and compare the different alternatives weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the product, thereby easing their actual decision-making process. Through easy and accessible product label information the student consumers with a label interest, as well those with a lack of interest would potentially make easier food decisions and have the reward of a more healthy living. The importance of label information (as first objective) was evident and was highlighted by several participants using nutritional aspects on labels in assistance for making healthy food choices added to a sustaining and healthy lifestyle. In addition the lack of label interest on the part of some student consumers decisions was based on previous product experience, time limitations as well as habitual food purchasing.

Determining the student consumers' decision-making process as a second objective, the results revealed that the student consumers' decision-making process was complex due to LLIP. The reason for this is the lack of label information on such products to support the information search and evaluation of alternative steps of their decision-making process. Therefore, student consumers are using different physical, label, product and personal factors to assist their decision-making process regarding LLIP.

To reach the last objective of this study the researcher interpreted the results by adapting the decision-making model of (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004) and applying

the above-mentioned results to it. This adapted model illustrates the process of the student consumers' decision-making process as well as the influential factors that student consumers used when faced with LLIP.

Food manufacturers should provide food products with labels to comply with the new labelling law, and to meet consumers' expectations by providing specific and correct information on cafeteria food products. Retailers could contribute to the student consumers' nutritional awareness through promotional efforts, such as developing new healthier food options, as well as accentuating the importance of good nutrition.

The student consumer should be motivated to use food labels through educational programmes aimed at student consumers eating habits and awareness towards an increase of nutritional information on food products, assisting student consumers during their decision-making process, in making healthy food choices and living a healthy lifestyle.

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CHAPTER 3

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

Student consumers' opinions and their decision-making process regarding limited label information on food products were investigated by means of a qualitative research design. Themes, concepts and sub-concepts were identified after data interpretation and the conclusions of this study will be discussed in this chapter.

This chapter provides conclusions regarding the achievement of the research objectives, the findings of the study and potential implications and recommendations of these results for student consumers, universities and the food industry. The importance of label information, as well as the influence of LLIP on student consumers' decision-making process were the first two objectives incorporated in this research, while the third objective was to apply the results from the present study to an existing decision-making model.

3.2 CONCLUSION

3.2.1 The importance of label information to student consumers

Many student consumers read label information and are aware of nutritional values and their label interest when faced with LLIP in the cafeteria. It was found that when student consumers were confronted with LLIP, they use purchase (brand loyalty and previous consumption) and personal (product preference, need and taste) motivations as internal related strategies during their purchase decisions. From the results of the first objective it became evident that two categories of student consumers exist on the university's campus, namely those with a label interest and those without a label interest.

3.2.1.1 Student consumers with a label interest

Specific label information important to these student consumers was the product name, content and nutritional information on a product label. The most important nutritional information that student consumers highlighted on a product label was the fat, protein, kilojoules and carbohydrate content. It is clear that student consumers

with label interest understand the importance of label information and product content and manufacturing information of food labels during their food choice decisions. The findings of the student consumers with label interest can be of enormous help to the retailer through knowing that product motivations such as specific label information are important to the student consumers when making their product decisions. The manufacturer could provide the correct label information on the displayed products for the student consumers to ease their purchase decisions.

3.2.1.2 Student consumers without label interest

Those students with a disinterest in label information used physically related properties such as the transparency of the package material, as well as the quality, appearance and availability of the product during their product decisions. The quality of LLIP was determined according to their personal related reasons, such as previous product experience and time limitations. In addition these student consumers consider product factors, such as the product appearance, the picture on the product and price information as important product motivations that form part of their internal related strategies.

The results indicated that two groups of student consumers exist with different motivations and strategies assisting their purchase decisions. The student consumers with a label interest are faced with incomplete information in the case of LLIP that complicates their purchase decisions and, therefore, the correct label information on food products is a necessity in order to ease their purchase decisions. The student consumers without a label interest need to be identified and with assistance and education the importance of label and nutritional information could potentially become clear and important to them, and assist them in changing their purchasing decisions and behaviour towards more healthy products.

3.2.2 Student consumers' decision-making process regarding limited label information products

The first step of the student consumers' decision-making process was their need recognition stage. When they were experiencing a need it was based on internal related strategies such as a specific product need, product taste or product preference. After recognizing the need, the student consumers' search for information began as

the next stage of their decision-making process. They were faced with incomplete product information and used physically related factors (such as label information, product freshness and healthy products) during their information search. The results also indicated that the student consumers used visual product elements during their information search. The next stage of the student consumers' decision-making process was the evaluation of alternatives where three themes evolved, namely product related, label related and personal related factors.

3.2.3 The application of the decision-making process to student consumers' purchasing of limited label information products

An existing decision-making model was adapted to accommodate the student consumers' decision-making process regarding LLIP. Due to the limited amount of information on cafeteria food products, the student consumers' information search process became more complex necessitating the use of other physical factors (correct label information and healthy food products that are freshly prepared) in addition to the use of label information. This more complex information search of student consumers in response to LLIP could motivate the product manufacturer to manufacture products with sufficient label information. In addition the retailer should be aware of the minimum criteria specified under the current regulations on the advertising and labelling of foodstuffs R2034, concerning label information. Products not complying with legislation requirements should not be sold or offered to consumers. Although some cafeteria food products are exempt from labels, basic information can be supplied and used to promote information to student consumers with a label interest.

It is, therefore, evident that this research provided insight into student consumers' decision-making process when confronted with LLIP. The information gained from this study could be used in future research, and is important to manufacturers and retailers, who could provide information such as the fat, sugar and salt content on food labels and also could increase student consumers knowledge of label information in developing new healthy products in the cafeteria context.

3.3 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Even though the study was conducted on student consumers as part of an isolated group at a university, the role and importance of label information became obvious. The results also indicated how important food label information was to student consumers with a label interest. Therefore, the importance of food label information should be promoted amongst student consumers with no interest in label information, as they tend to have low or no priority in making healthy food decisions. The non-label users should be convinced and encouraged to use the nutrition information section on the food label in comparing the advantages and disadvantages of different products to make a change in their purchasing behaviour. For the retailers and manufacturers a worldwide trend towards healthier lifestyles will increase the need for quality products and product labels, indicating that complete and informative food labels could promote student consumers' knowledge and awareness of healthier food choices.

The conclusion could be made that minimal but correct label information on food products influences different aspects of the student consumers' purchasing behaviour, such as their nutritional knowledge of foods and their awareness of label information. Therefore, cafeteria retailers should embark on the adoption of new ideas and healthy products that could be done through changing the display of healthy foods products, accentuating the "good" nutrients in promoting healthy eating habits. The reduction of healthy food prices, as well as the availability of healthy food alternatives with the emphasis on health benefits to student consumers will encourage them to purchase healthier foods.

3.4 FUTURE RESEARCH

The sample consisted of any male or female undergraduate student, aged 19 to 23 years that entered the cafeteria at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus. Future research could include a larger sample of participants and could be extended to young adults of the same generation outside the university environment, to investigate the use of label information among young adults, without tertiary education in general.

The purpose of the study was also to investigate and explore the importance of food label information to student consumers, as well as their decision-making process regarding limited label information on food products in a cafeteria setting. Future research could include a quantitative approach to investigate the importance of label information to consumers. Consumer scientists could create a better eating behaviour by contributing specific knowledge and experience towards nutritional information on campus, to an overall good diet for young adults.

Future research could also include other aspects of the student consumers' decision-making process, such as the stimulus that leads or instigates the recognition of a need of the student consumers' decision-making process. Other aspects such as the external influence on the student consumer's decision-making process (known as the input of the consumer's decision-making process) includes their characteristics and individual differences, as well as the result or satisfaction of the student consumers' purchasing decision (known as the output of the consumers' decision-making process) could be studied. Furthermore, future studies could also make provision for different product categories during the data collection of the research project, because student consumers consider purchasing food products from the cafeteria to be low risk or habitual purchasing items.

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM PRESENTED TO PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

CONSENT FORMS PRESENTED TO PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY



**NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
HOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT**

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT

**STUDENT CONSUMERS' DECISION-MAKING PROCESS REGARDING FOOD
PRODUCTS CONTAINING LIMITED LABEL INFORMATION**

Dear Mr. /Mrs. /Miss

Date ... / .../2006

AIM AND NATURE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this research project is to obtain consumers' perception, ideas and opinions of limited labeled information towards food products and also to understand the decision-making process of the consumer when confronted with a food product with limited labeled information.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

You will be asked to participate in different information collecting methods. For example a semi-structured interview or an indirect projective technique or you will be asked to read through a vignette, which you can give your opinion and perception on. The discussion will be guided by a facilitator.

No answer or response would be regarded as correct or incorrect.

No preparation is required for the discussion.

NOTICE OF RECORDINGS

It is brought to your attention that the interview will be recorded on tape, to ensure that valuable information is preserved and analysed within the appropriate context. After completion of the interviews, these recordings will be transcribed to text. You

have the right to examine the transcribed text at any given time during the course and completion of the research project.

DECLARATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Your opinion is considered strictly confidential and only members of the research team will have access to the information. No data published in dissertations or journals will contain any particulars that could identify you as a participant in this study. You are, therefore, assured of your anonymity.

INFORMATION

Should you require more information, please do not hesitate to contact Sophia Schutte, (Masters' degree student) at 084 804 0203 or the project leader Dr. Daleen van der Merwe at 018 299 2476.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I, the undersigned _____ (full names) read through the information provided about the research project and declare that I fully understand the content thereof. I was given the opportunity (if so preferred) to discuss any aspects of the project with the researchers and hereby voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

I would hereby like to exempt the University or any employee or any student of the University from any liability which I might incur during this project.

I furthermore waive my right to institute any claims whatsoever against the University which may arise during the running of the project or the conduct of any person involved in the project, except for claims arising from the negligent conduct of the University or its employees or students.

I received a signed copy of the consent form.

Signature of participant: _____

Signed at: _____ on _____

APPENDIX B

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview guide: Interviews at the Cafeteria

1. I noticed you paid attention to the product labels.
What type of information on a product label is important to you?
2. If you purchase a product in the cafeteria how do you choose the correct product?

APPENDIX C

VIGNETTE SCENARIO INTERVIEW GUIDE

VIGNETTE INTERVIEWED GUIDE

Vignette interview guide: Interviews at the Cafeteria

Peet / Petro, a second year Law student is on his/her way from the library to the cafeteria. He/she is busy studying for a difficult subject in the upcoming examination. The passing week he/she studied late at night to finish assignments on time. At this stage Peet/Petro was exhausted and tired; therefore he/she decided to get something to eat from the cafeteria. Furthermore Peet/Petro was struggling to concentrate and realized all the biscuits and cookies of the previous late nights were not nutritious.

In the cafeteria at the first display fridge, he/she saw the different sandwiches, muffins and prego rolls. He/she was hungry but there are so many products to choose from. In his/her struggle to make a decision he/she moved deeper into the cafeteria to all the different salads, but unfortunately there were no expiry dates or prices on the salads, now his/her decision was even more difficult. At last he/she got a chicken roll with the label “chicken”, and he/she decided to take the sandwich.

1. If you want something nutritious to eat, but the products in the cafeteria don't have labels, what will you do?
2. What will influence your decision-making process if you have to decide between products with limited information on the labels?

APPENDIX D

**DATA REFLECTING THE IMPORTANCE OF LABEL
INFORMATION TO STUDENT CONSUMERS' WHEN
CHOOSING FOOD PRODUCTS AT THE CAFETERIA**

(OBJECTIVE 1)

Data collection method: Semi-Structured interview

Table 1: Student consumers' internal and product related strategies when confronted with LLIP at the cafeteria.

Theme	Category	Concept	Sub Concept	Statement
Internal related strategies	Purchase motivation	Decide beforehand	Pre-decision	"..I know beforehand what I want otherwise I am in the queue too long.." "..The cafeteria is far from me, therefore I make my decision on my way to the cafeteria.." "..Sometimes I decide beforehand what am I going to buy.."
		Previous consumption	Previous intake	"..I make my decisions based on my food intake of the previous day.." "..I will take something that tastes nice and that I have eaten before.." "..I am purchasing products that I am used to, I am not somebody that will try something new, I keep with the usual.." "..I don't read brandnames in the cafeteria, I am used to the products there.." "..I make my decisions based on my perception of a product after I bought the product the first time.."
		Brand loyalty		"..I like Cadbury's therefore I will take such a product.." "..A product's brandname makes a contribution to my decision.." "..You will buy a brand that you know better than other products from the same brand.."
		Not label sensitive		"..Labels don't influence me.." "..More or less fat, is not going to influence my purchase.." "..The amount of kilojoules won't influence my purchase decision.."
	Personal motivation	Product preference	Healthy foods	"..I like chicken and it is a healthy meal.." "..I want to eat healthy.." "..I will take something that gives me energy like a salad.."
			Low fat food product	"..I will take a brown sandwich without butter.." "..I will take something that is the least fattening.." "..I will take a product that is not made in oil.."
		Product need	Circumstances	"..I will take a muffin because I am stressed and have not eaten breakfast.." "..I was standing in front of the shelf and was looking for something that I can eat on the go, that is why I took the first thing that caught my eye.."
			Desire	"..At first I will take the product for which my desire is.." "..I make my decisions based on my desire.."
		Product taste		"..I will make my decision based on what tastes the best.."

Data collection method: Semi-Structured interview

Table 1 (continued): Student consumers' internal and product related strategies when confronted with LLIP at the cafeteria.

Theme	Category	Concept	Sub Concept	Statement
Internal related strategies	Personal motivation	Other peoples' influence	Friends' influence	"..Today my friend influenced me to buy the carrot and nut muffin.."
				"..I will also take something that my friends said taste nice.."
		Availability of products		"..I will look at which products are available in the cafeteria, I know what I want.."
Product related strategies	Product motivation	Product appearance	Picture on label	"..I like a picture on a product label, then you can see what the product looks like.." "..If the picture looks attractive on the package I will take the product.."
			Colourful package	"..I will take Astro the muffin or the brownie, because when you look at the package it is colourful and it look delicious.." "..Colourful packaging attracts my attention easily.." "..I will take the product that is more colourful than the other.."
			Transparant package	"..You can see what is inside the package.." "..I will take a salad because you can see through the tub.." "..I will take the product where you can see what you get.." "..I will purchase a chicken roll because you can see the roll through the packaging.." "..I will take a salad because you can see through the tub what ingredients are inside.."
			Freshness of product	"..I will look at whether the product is fresh, then whether I like the product.."
			Product size	"..I will take a smaller product that not make me feel stuffed.." "..If I have to decide between the muffins, I will take the largest one.."
		Label information	Ingredients	"..I am looking at the ingredients, if the product is healthy or not.."
			Nutritional information	"..I have to eat the basic nutrients, like vitamins and protein.."
		Price awareness		"..If the product is expensive I will share it with somebody.." "..I would rather take a muffin for five rand.." "..The price of the product is very important for me.."
		New product awareness		"..I like to try out new products, but it depends on my state of mind.." "..Sometimes I will try something new that I haven't tried before.."

APPENDIX E

DATA REFLECTING THE IMPORTANCE OF SPECIFIC LABEL INFORMATION TO STUDENT CONSUMERS WHEN CHOOSING PRODUCTS AT THE CAFETERIA

(OBJECTIVE 1)

Data collection method: Semi-Structured Interview

Table 1: Reasons for using specific label information during the selection of LLIP at the cafeteria.

Theme	Category	Concept	Sub Concept	Statement
Student consumers' with label interest.	Product content and manufacturing information.	Date information	Expiry date	"..At first I will look at the expiry date of the products.." "..The expiry date is important to me, I won't buy a salad without it.."
			Preparation date	"..I want to know when the sandwich is made, not when it expires.."
		Price		"..Important information on a product is the price and expiry date.." "..The price and expiry date is important to me.."
		Ingredients		"..I want to know what type of meat they use on the sandwiches.." "..I won't take a pie because I can't see what is inside the pie.." "..I would like the ingredients on the sandwich because you won't know what type of butter they use.."
		Preservatives		"..I always look at the preservatives in a product.." "..I want the ingredients on the products, because sometimes are there preservatives in.."
		Nutritional information	Fat content	"..I always look at the index at the back of the product, mostly the fat percentage.." "..I always read the labels, especially the nutritional information on the back of the package, I look for the fat percentage.." "..The fat percentage on the products is important to me. Maybe they can put the info on the sandwiches.."
			Energy content	"..I read labels, and would like to see the fat and kilojoule percentage on the labels.." "..I want the nutritional value on a label because I like to see how many calories and carbohydrates are in the product.."
			Carbohydrate content	"..I read the nutritional information on the products because I can't eat too much carbohydrates.."
			Protein	"..The amount of protein, fat and the ingredients must be on a food label.."
		Product representation	Picture	"..At first I would like a picture on the label.." "..If they want to, they can put a picture of the pie on the label.."

Data collection method: Semi-Structured Interview

Table 1 (continued): Reasons for using specific label information during the selection of LLIP at the cafeteria.

Theme	Category	Concept	Sub Concept	Statement
Student consumers' with label interest.	Product content and manufacturing information.	Product name		"..I will take a product with only a name on the label, if the product looks healthy.." "..The most important information on a label is the name of the product.." "..The name of the product must also be clear and the product must be appealing.."
		Brand information		"..A logo makes the product trustworthy.." "..At first I look at the type and brand of the pic, then the brand name.."
Student consumers' with no label interest.	Physical related reasons for the consumer with disinterest in label information.	Package transparency		"..If you can see the product it's not necessary for a label, because you can see through the package that the sandwich is fresh.."
		Product quality		"..It is about the freshness and quality of the product.." "..If I know the quality of the product, I don't need extra information.."
		Product appearance		"..I don't read the information on the label, I am more focused on what the product looks like.." "..The label is not an issue for me, you can see there is biltong on the sandwich"
		Availability		"..I will take a product with only a name on if it is the only product available.."
	Personal related reasons for the consumer with disinterest in label information.	Product experience		"..I will buy the sandwich because I know the ingredients on it.."
		Time limitations		"..I don't have time to read labels it is about what you see.." "..If I am in a hurry I never read the product label.." "..If there is not enough information on a product and if I am in a hurry I will take it.."
		Unimportance of label information		"..The ingredients and the nutritional values is not important to me.."

APPENDIX F

DATA REFLECTING STUDENT CONSUMERS' DECISION- MAKING PROCESS REGARDING LLIP (INFORMATION SEARCH)

(OBJECTIVE 2)

Data collection method: Vignette

Table 1: Physical factors affecting student consumers' information search regarding LLIP.

Theme	Concept	Sub Concept	Statement
Information search based on physical factors in response to LLIP.	Healthy products		"..It depend on which products are available, at first I look if the product is good for me.." "..If I want something healthy, I will buy a brown bread sandwich" ".. Not something like a chicken wrap, because it is prepared in oil and make fat.."
	Product freshness		"..I don't look for brand names, therefore the product have to be fresh.."
	Availability of products		"..When I enter the cafeteria I walked around, see what products are available, and then choose something.." "..It depend on what products are available.."
	Experiment with new product		"..Maybe I want to try out something new.."
	Product preference		"..I will choose the banana muffin because it is my favourite and a muffin is a healthy meal.." ".. I am familiar with some products, therefore I won't try something new.."
	Visually appealing	Appetising product	"..The appearance of the sandwich is important, it has to look delicious.."
		Attractive packaging	"..A label that looks neat and colourful are important and the packaging also has to look pretty.."
		Transparant package	"..If you can see a product through the package.." "..I have to see the product.."
		Colourful label	".. I shop with my eyes, if a product have a colourful label it will easily attracts my attention.."
	Label information	Nutritional information	".. I have to look for nutritional values on the products.." ".. I look at the nutritional information on a product when I am on a diet.."
		Preservatives	".. Sometimes I want to know if there is preservatives in a product.."
		Energy content	"..I read labels for the kilojoule content, I want to see if the product will make me fat.."
		Low GI status	"..The label must state that the sandwich is low GI.."

Data collection method: Vignette

Table 1 (continued): Physical factors affecting student consumers' information search regarding LLIP.

Theme	Concept	Sub Concept	Statement
Information search based on physical factors in response to LLIP.	Label information	Allergens	"..I am allergic to some ingredients.."
		Specific ingredients	"..I want to know if there is low fat butter, or no butter on the sandwich.." "..I want to know if there is mayonnaise or butter on a sandwich.." ".. It is important for me to know the ingredients.."
		Sell-by date and price	"..The sell by date and the price must also be on the salads.." "..I would like the sell-by date and price on a product.."
		Expiry date	".. It will influence my decision if there is not an expiry date.."
		Product name	"..I want to know the products name, as well as what is in the product.."

APPENDIX G

DATA REFLECTING STUDENT CONSUMERS' DECISION- MAKING PROCESS REGARDING LLIP (EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES)

(OBJECTIVE 2)

Data collection method: Semi-Structured interview

Table 1: Student consumers evaluation of alternatives when confronted with different LLIP's.

Theme	Category	Concept	Sub Concept	Statement
Evaluation based on product related factors.	Use product information	Product specific	Know the product	"..If I know the product I will just take it, otherwise I will read the label on the product that I don't know.."
		Product presentation	Transparant packaging	"..I think the packaging of a product is important, it helps you to see if the product is still fresh.."
		Product size	Biggest muffin	"..I will take the biggest muffin.."
		New product	Read the label	"..If I am not sure about a new product I will read the label.."
		Appealing product	Looks good and fresh	"..I will take the product that looks good and fresh.."
			Picture look pretty	"..If the product is in a pretty package, you can see what you will get.."
		Appealing package	Colourful package	"..I took the Astro muffin because the package is colourful and attractive.." "..The colour of the package can contributes to my choice .."
Evaluation based on label related factors.	Use label information	Brandname	Known brand	"..I know Cadbury's, it is a known brand, I feel comfortable buying the brand." "..I will take the brownie because it is a known brand, I am familiar with.." "..I won't try a strange product, I will rather take a known brand.."
			Picture on label	"..I will take the brownie, because the picture looks pretty and nice.."
			Catches attention	"..A brandname on a product catches more of my attention than a nice package.."
		Label information	Price information	"..I look at the price of the product, you can get a product that makes fat for two rand.."
			Expiry date	".. I don't look at the expiry date on a product, the price is important to me.."
		Nutritional information	Salt content	"..I am very health conscious and read labels to see how much salt the product contain.."
			Fat percentage	"..I always look at the fat percentage on a product label.." "..I read labels and will search for the product that look the healthiest, with the smallest percentage of fat.."

Data collection method: Semi-Structured interview

Table 1 (continued): Student consumers evaluation of alternatives when confronted with different LLIP's.

Theme	Category	Concept	Sub Concept	Statement
		Ingredient information	Specific ingredients	"..I will look at the label to see the type of filling on the sandwich.." "..If the product looks nice but the label states garlic, I won't buy it.."
Evaluation based on personal factors.	Don't use label information	Habitual purchase	Product preference	"..I will take a product that I know and have eaten before.." "..I will take the banana muffin, because I like the taste of the muffin.." "..I will take something that I know, like a sandwich.."
		Emotional choice	Product experience	"..I will take the product that looks as if it can taste nice.."
			Product desire	"..If I don't know what I want, I will take something I have a desire for.." "..It depend on my desire, if I want something sweet I will take the product with chocolate on.."
	Non-label user.	Non-label reader	Don't read label information	"..I don't read labels, I take the product that catches my attention.." "..Information on a label don't worry me, I don't read it.." "..I don't have to read labels, I am not allergic to anything.."
			Unimportant labels	"..The label is not important to me, I will try all the muffins.."

APPENDIX H
BRITISH FOOD JOURNAL - MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINE

BRITISH FOOD JOURNAL

AUTHOR GUIDELINES

The Editor

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Editorial objectives

The aim of the journal is to provide a vehicle for the dissemination of food-related research of the highest academic quality to an international multi-disciplinary audience.

Editorial scope

1. Work on any aspect of food will be considered for publication provided it is of a high academic standard.
2. Authors should take into account the international readership of the journal when drafting papers.
3. The aim of the journal is to present work in a manner which is accessible to a readership from a variety of backgrounds, including different academic disciplines and non-academics.

Thus, where research of a highly technical nature is reported, the text should be written in a form which is clear to non-specialists in the area of enquiry. However, if required for clarification, the text can be supported by a technical annexe at the end of the paper. Where possible, authors should spell out the implications of their word for those who produce and retail food and regulate the food system.

The reviewing process

Each paper is reviewed by the editor and, if it is judged suitable for this publication, it is then sent to two referees for double blind peer review. Based on their recommendations, the editor then decides whether the paper should be accepted as is, revised or rejected.

The editor may make use of iThenticate software for checking the originality of submissions received.

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Manuscript requirements

Three copies of the manuscript should be submitted in double line spacing with wide margins. All authors should be shown and **author's details** must be printed on a separate sheet and the author should not be identified anywhere else in the article.

As a guide, articles should be between 3,000 and 5,000 words in **length**. A **title** of not more than eight words should be provided. A brief **autobiographical note** should be supplied including full name, affiliation, e-mail address and full international contact details. Authors must supply a **structured abstract** set out under 4-6 sub-headings: Purpose; Methodology/Approach; Findings; Research limitations/implications (if applicable); Practical implications (if applicable); and, the Originality/value of the paper. Maximum is 250 words in total. In addition provide

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Where there is **methodology**, it should be clearly described under a separate heading. **Headings** must be short, clearly defined and not numbered. **Notes** or **Endnotes** should be used only if absolutely necessary and must be identified in the text by consecutive numbers, enclosed in square brackets and listed at the end of the article.

All **figures** (charts, diagrams and line drawings) and **Plates** (photographic images) should be submitted in both electronic form and hard copy originals. Figures should be of clear quality, in black and white and numbered consecutively with arabic numerals. Figures created in MS Word, MS Power Point, MS Excel, Illustrator and Freehand should be saved in their native formats. Electronic figures created in other applications should be copied from the origination software and pasted into a blank MS Word document or saved and imported into a MS word document b choosing "Insert" form the menu bar, "Picture" form the drop-down menu and selecting "From File..." to select the graphic to be imported. For figures which cannot by supplied in MS Word, acceptable standard image formats are: .pdf, .ai, .wmf and .eps. If you are unable to supply graphics in these formats then please ensure they are .tif, .jpeg, or .bmp at a resolution of at least 300dpi and at least 10cm wide. To prepare screenshots, simultaneously press the "Alt" and "Print screen" keys on the keyboard, open a blank Microsoft Word document and simultaneously press "Ctrl" and "V" to paste the image. (Capture al the contents/windows on the computer screen to paste into MS Word, by simultaneously pressing "Ctrl" and "Print Screen".)

For photographic images (plates) good quality original photographs should be submitted. If supplied electronically they should be saved as .tif or .jpeg files at a resolution of at least 300dpi and at least 10cm wide. Digital camera settings should be set at the highest resolution/quality as possible.

In the text of the paper the preferred position of all tables, figures and plates should be indicated by typing on a separate line the words "Take in Figure (No.)" or "Take in

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References to other publications must be in Harvard style and carefully checked for completeness, accuracy and consistency. This is very important in an electronic environment because it enables your readers to exploit the Reference Linking facility on the database and link back to the works you have cited through CrossRef. You should include all author names and initials and give any journal title in full. You should cite publications in the text: (Adams, 2006) using the first named author's name or (Adam *et al.*, 2006), when there are three or more authors. At the end of the paper a reference list in alphabetical order should be supplied:

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For journals: surname, initials, (year), "title of article", *journal name*, volume, number, pages, e.g. Capizzi, M.T. and Ferguson, R. (2005), "Loyalty trends for the twenty-first century", *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 72-80.

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