

The Influence of Health and Taste Claims in Consumer Perception of Food Products and Purchasing Intentions

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Abstract

An increase in diseases related to life-style choices such as diet has spurred consumers to become more interested in the healthiness of food products. Food manufacturers have responded to this sudden pressure to create healthier products by adding health claims to their products. However, little is known about consumers' perceptions of products with health claims and how this may impact their purchasing decisions. This thesis seeks to investigate to what extent health claims may influence consumers' health and taste perceptions of food products and their purchasing decisions. Moreover, this thesis explores if these perceptions and intentions change with the addition of a taste claim in combination with a health claim. The empirical part of this thesis includes an online experiment which was conducted to test the theoretically developed hypotheses. The survey resulted in 99 viable respondents. The positive influence of health claims and health and taste claims on consumers' healthfulness and tastiness perceptions towards a product has not been confirmed by the findings of the experiment. Based on these findings, it is recommended that further research is conducted on the topic of consumer understanding of health and taste labeling, and how this influences their perceptions towards a product. Moreover, it is recommended that stricter legislation and regulations are created to combat consumer misunderstanding of health and taste labeling in food products.

Key Words: Health Claims, Taste Claims, Consumer, Purchasing Intentions, Labels, Consumer Understanding, Food Labeling