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Factors Influencing Consumer Purchasing Intention based on Food Labels

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Abstract

This is a paper that highlighted on factors that influence the intention of consumers to buy food product based on food labels. Food label consist of any written, printed or graphic information that represent on the package of the product or is exhibited near the food for the purpose of promoting the sale or disposal. There are many factors contributing to the use of food labels on purchasing decision. Hence, the paper discusses on the factors influencing consumer purchasing intention based on food labels.

Key words: Knowledge; Awareness; Attitude; Subjective norm; Perceived behaviour control

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, people are more concerned about what they put in their shopping cart especially when it comes to food. Food generally contains a variety of nourishment that is highly necessary for optimal body functioning, and it is mentioned that the decision consumers make before purchasing or consuming any food product is a function of the quality of food, price, packaging, and labelling (Norzaidi, Ramli, Jemahadi, & Razalli, 2011). Hence, most of them are careful in choosing food.

The aim of food labelling is to provide consumers with information which may influence their purchasing decisions. For example, consumers may want to know what ingredients are in a food product, its nutritional properties and etc. The emerging and growing economy and the increasing consumer population with higher purchasing power coupled with the growing number of enlightened people about safe and healthier food within the Malaysian community has impelled the current study (Latiff, Rezai, Mohamed, & Ayob, 2015). Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the factors influencing consumer purchasing intention based on food labels in Malaysia.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Asiamah (2006), food label consist of any written, printed or graphic information that represent on the package of the product or is exhibited near the food for the purpose of promoting the sale or disposal. Detailed, honest and accurate labelling is essential to inform the consumer the exact nature and characteristics of the food product, enabling them to make a more informed choice (Court, 2009). There are some factors influencing consumer purchasing intention based on food labels.

Food labels can be very complicated and tricky to understand. Most consumers do not understand of food label information put on the food product they buy (Doauaud, Mahgoub, Lesoli, & Gobotwang, 2007). Consumers with good nutrition knowledge were reported to be more likely to use the nutrition label when shopping for foods (Barreiro-Hurlé, Gracia, & De-Magistris, 2010). Consumers who have awareness and knowledge will likely take their time to choose the best food products by reading the labels.

Attitude on the other hand, is a predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards

a certain idea, object, person, or situation. Attitude influences an individual's choice of action, and responses to challenges, incentives, and rewards (www.businessdictionary.com). Attitude towards nutrition fact label, which includes usefulness, accuracy and truthfulness acts as a mediator for label reading behaviour and nutrition knowledge (Misra, 2007).

Meanwhile, subjective norm is the perceived social pressure to engage or not to engage in a behaviour. It is also an individual's perception about the particular behaviour, which is influenced by the judgment of significant others such as parents or spouses (www.wikipedia.com). According to Rezai, Nasir, Mohamed, and Ann (2014), Malaysia is one of the fastest-growing economies with a substantial number of its population becoming more enlightened about safe and healthier food—thus, there is the possibility that Malaysians are showing more interest in purchasing and consuming more healthy and hygienic food.

Perceived behaviour control in other words is the ability to purchase food products based on food labels. According to Ajzen (1991), perceived behaviour control was described as the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour. Nevertheless, perceived behavioural control plays a significant role in the formation of behaviour, thereby justifying application of food labelling utilization on food products.

Intention, defined as a plan to perform a particular behaviour, is an accepted, perhaps the most important factor, for directly predicting behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Consumers tend to perform actual behaviours when their intentions to perform that behaviour become stronger (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). If the consumer intends to buy the food product after studying the labels, the consumer will likely buy the product.

Generally, the stronger the intention to undertake the behaviour, the more likely its performance becomes actuality (Ajzen, 1991). Thus, Ajzen and Fishbein (2000) recommended that measurement of behavioural intention assumes predictive power for the future, with the focus on behavioural intention rather than actual behaviour. Therefore, this study uses behavioural intention as a construct for outcome, influenced by awareness and knowledge, attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research methodology includes the survey questionnaire design, the sample and methods of the data analysis. The population of the study comprises both Muslim and non-Muslims consumer in Klang Valley, Malaysia. A stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting 200 samples.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

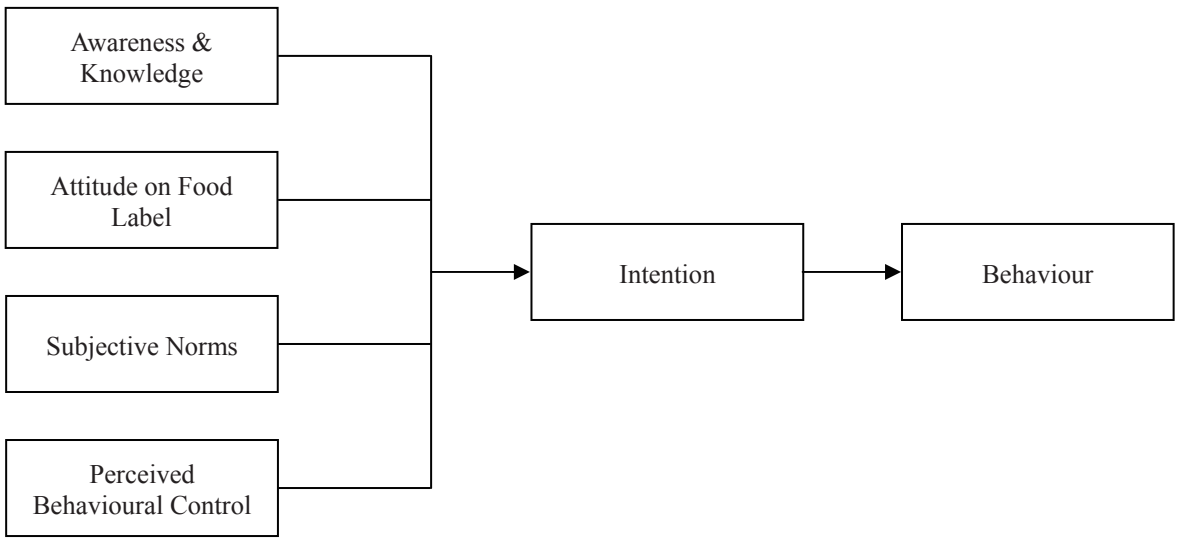

Figure 1
Factors Influencing Consumer Purchasing Intention

2.2 Data Collection and Sampling Frame

A random sample was made where more than 200 respondents were given a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire composed of three sections, A, B and C. Section A comprised of demographic segmentation such as residential area, gender, race, religion and etc. The other two sections focused on the factors influencing consumer purchasing intention. Section B consisted of awareness and knowledge related questions. Lastly, Section C was divided into 4 part which are attitude towards food label, subjective norms, perceived behaviour control and intention. A 7-point Likert scale was used in the survey.

2.3 Methods of Analysis

The data collected then was analysed using SPSS. Descriptive analysis was used for the demographic section. Reliability test was used to identify whether the independent variables are suitable to use for the research. Finally, since the objective of the study is to investigate the relationship between the influencing factors and the consumer purchasing intention based on food labels, correlation analysis was used in order to find the extent to which the influencing factors effect consumer purchasing intention based on food label.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Demographic Section

Descriptive statistics is the term given to the analysis of data that helps describe, show or summarize data in a meaningful way such that, for example, patterns might emerge from the data. For demographic section, descriptive analysis was used to determine the percentage of the respondents for the specific segmentations.

According to the Table 1 below, 57.5% of the respondents were female where more than half 63% of the overall respondents were from urban residential area. It is also stated that 59% of the respondents were already married. For education, 35% of them had a diploma, while 30% get a bachelor degree, followed by 19% of postgraduates, 15% of them were secondary students and only 0.5% were primary students.

More than half which is 60% of the respondents were Malay while 21.5% were Chinese, 16.5% were Indians and another 2% were from other race that did not stated. Surprisingly, 52.5% of the respondent worked in public sector and 38% of them were in private sectors. Only small percentage of the respondents were either self-employed (6.5%), retiree (2.5%) or housewife (0.5%).

The majority of the respondents were Muslims (65%), 16% Buddhist, 11% Hindus and only 8% of the respondents were Christians. Lastly, 37% of the respondents had religious awareness as their lifestyle, 28.5% of them were health conscious, 22% were environmentalist and 12.5% were active person.

Table 1
Demographic Segmentation (n = 200)

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	85	42.5
	Female	115	57.5
Residential Area	Urban	126	63.0
	Suburban	74	37.0
Marital Status	Single	82	41.0
	Married	118	59.0
Education	Primary	1	0.5
	Secondary	30	15.0
	Diploma	70	35.0
	Degree	61	30.5
	Postgraduate	38	19.0
Race	Malay	120	60.0
	Chinese	43	21.5
	Indian	33	16.5
	Others	4	2.0
Occupation	Public Sector	105	52.5
	Private Sector	76	38.0
	Self Employed	13	6.5
	Retired	5	2.5
	Housewife	1	0.5
Religion	Islam	130	65.0
	Christian	16	8.0
	Buddhist	32	16.0
	Hindu	22	11.0
Lifestyle	Physical Activity	44	22.0
	Environmental Activist	25	12.5
	Health Consciousness	57	28.5
	Religious Awareness	74	37.0

3.2 Reliability Test

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability. This section was to measure whether the variable is suitable for the research. From Table 2 below, we can see that Cronbach's Alpha for knowledge and awareness is 0.729, which indicated a high level of consistency for this variable. Hence, knowledge and awareness were suitable variable for the research.

Table 2
Reliability Statistics for Knowledge & Awareness

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.729	.707	11

From Table 3 below, the Cronbach's Alpha for attitude towards food labels is 0.727, which indicated a high level of consistency for this variable. Hence, the attitude towards food label was a suitable variable for the research.

Table 3
Reliability Statistics for Attitude towards Food Labels

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.727	.781	11

Besides the same case for subjective norm. Table 4 below shows the Cronbach's Alpha for subjective norm is 0.785 that tells a high level of consistency. So, the subjective norm was also a suitable variable for the research.

Table 4
Reliability Statistics for Subjective Norms

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.785	.811	14

Lastly, Table 5 indicated the Cronbach's Alpha for perceived behaviour control is 0.865 which is very high level of consistency. Just like others, perceived behaviour control was a suitable variable for the research.

Table 5
Reliability Statistics for Perceived Behaviour Control

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.865	.852	13

Since the Cronbach's Alpha for all variables are above 0.6, the variables were closely related as a group.

3.3 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis deals with relationships among variables. The correlation coefficient is a measure of linear association between two variables. Values of the correlation coefficient are always between -1 and +1. A correlation coefficient of +1 indicates that two variables are perfectly related in a positive linear sense, a correlation coefficient of -1 indicates that two variables are perfectly related in a negative linear sense, and a correlation coefficient of 0 indicates that there is no linear relationship between the two variables. In simple words, correlation analysis is to test the significance relationship between the variables.

The dependant variable in this study is the intention. The independent variables are the knowledge, attitude, subjective norm and perceived behaviour control. From Table 6 below, the value of 1 between the correlations between intentions with itself indicates a perfect correlation. The Pearson Correlation value between knowledge and intention is 0.507. It shows that knowledge is moderately correlated with intention. The positive sign of the correlation value indicates the positive relationship between the variables; the more knowledgeable the consumers on food label, the higher the intention to purchase the food product. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level of two-tailed test.

Besides, for attitude and the intention, the Pearson Correlation value is 0.243 which indicates a low correlation between the two variables. However, the positive sign on the correlation value also indicates a positive relationship between the two; the more positive the attitude towards food label, the higher the intention to purchase the products. The correlation is also significant at the 0.01 level of two-tailed test.

For the third factor, the Pearson Correlation value between the subjective norm and intention is 0.228 which is also a low correlation. The relationship however is a positive relationship according to the positive sign on the correlation value; the higher the subjective norm, the higher the intention on buying the food products based on food label. The relation is significant at the 0.01 level of two-tailed test.

Lastly, for the perceived behaviour control and intention, the Pearson Correlation value is 0.823. The value indicates a high correlation between the variables and the positive sign also shows the positive relationship between those two; the higher the perceived behaviour control, the higher the intention on purchasing the food products based on food labels. The correlation is also significant at the 0.01 level of two-tailed test. From the correlation test, we can say that all the variables are correlated with each other.

Table 6
Correlations

		Total Knowledge	Total Attitude	Total Subjective Norm	Total Perceived Behaviour Control	Total Intention
Total Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	1	.213**	.448**	.582**	.507**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	200	200
Total Attitude	Pearson Correlation	213**	1.	582**	.421**	.243**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		.000	.000	.001
	N	200	200	200	200	200
Total Subjective Norm	Pearson Correlation	.448**	.582**	1	.451**	.228**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.001
	N	200	200	200	200	200
Total Perceived Behaviour Control	Pearson Correlation	.582**	.421**	.451**	1	.823**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	200	200	200	200	200
Total Intention	Pearson Correlation	.507**	.243**	.228**	.823**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.001	.000	
	N	200	200	200	200	200

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study is to find out the factors influencing consumer purchasing intention based on food labels. As we can see from the results above, there are four important factors highlighted in this research which are awareness and knowledge, attitude towards food label, subjective norm and perceived behaviour control. This factors influenced the consumers purchasing intention on labelled food products that resulted in consumers purchasing behaviour. Food labels play an important role in determining the consumers purchasing intention. The industry should be alerted on this issue of food labelling since the consumers becoming more aware on food labelling. The factors can be used to examine the consumers' attitude on food labelling, hence the industry can be enhanced and improved to satisfy the consumers' needs and wants.

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