



Consumer Understanding and Acceptance of Healthier Food Choices

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The alarming increase of obesity amongst adults and children as per the 2013 Global Burden of Disease Study has called for global and national intervention. In reaction to this Nielsen's Global Health and Wellness Survey published in 2015 claims that consumers have taken charge themselves by making more healthful food choices. Considering the consumer, it becomes interesting to determine what healthy food means to the consumer because if this concept is understood from a consumer perspective it is thought that it would be easier to market healthy food to consumers by using the aspects they are looking for in healthy food. Unfortunately the purchase decision is much more complex at the best of times and feeding into this process is human behaviour that is rarely predictable to the last action of which only intentional behaviour can be inferred.

The food manufacturing industry is challenged to provide healthful food choices to the consumer but, when it comes to making the choice, consumers may not be so willing to accept what is on offer. This may not be because of poor marketing attempts but because of social, cultural, environmental or individually crafted barriers consumers are faced with that hamper quick acceptance of healthier options. Loaded into this mix is the habitual behaviour and shopper intent of a consumer that results in adding another dynamic to the purchasing decision. The decision to purchase healthier food options is therefore not a straight forward strategy by the consumer.

It is specifically the individually crafted barriers that contain a whole psychological field that should not be eliminated from understanding the consumer's approach to healthier food choices. Consumer perception, attitudes, motives and values sometimes offer a lens through which the reasons why consumers are not early adopters of healthier foods can be studied. These are only a few elements that contribute to the complex concept of the acceptance of healthier foods. This presentation will therefore aim to provide an overview of the approaches and findings on consumer research in relation to positioning healthier food options in the market place.