



Study on Awareness, Attitude and Practices Regarding Food Labelling Among Adults

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Food labelling serves as an important communication tool between food manufacturers and consumers. It provides essential information regarding ingredients, nutritional composition, storage conditions, manufacturing date, expiry date and food safety. Proper understanding of food labels enables consumers to make healthier food choices and reduce the risk of nutrition-related diseases. The present study was conducted to assess awareness, attitude and practices regarding food labelling among adults. A total of 100 respondents were selected through random sampling and data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The study revealed that awareness regarding product name and expiry date was high, whereas awareness regarding nutritional information, ingredient lists and food additives remained comparatively low. Most respondents showed positive attitudes towards food labelling and recognized its importance in healthy food selection. However, lack of understanding, small font size and lack of interest were identified as major barriers to food label usage. The findings highlight the need for nutrition education programmes and improved food label design to enhance consumer understanding and promote informed food choices.

Introduction

The rapid growth of the food processing industry has resulted in a substantial increase in the availability and consumption of packaged foods. As consumers are exposed to a wide variety of food products, food labels have become an important tool for providing information about the contents and quality of food products. Food labels contain essential information such as product name, ingredient list, nutrition facts, manufacturing and expiry dates, storage conditions and instructions for use. These details enable consumers to compare products, evaluate nutritional quality and make healthier food choices. Food labelling also plays a crucial role in preventing food-related health problems. Individuals suffering from diabetes, hypertension, obesity, food allergies and other chronic diseases often rely on food labels to monitor nutrient intake and avoid harmful ingredients. Consequently, food labels act as an important link between food manufacturers and consumers. Despite the availability of food label information, many consumers do not fully understand or utilize the information provided. Therefore, understanding consumer awareness, attitudes and practices regarding food labelling is important for developing strategies that encourage healthy food selection and improve public health (1-5)

Methodology

The study entitled “Awareness, Attitude and Practices Regarding Food Labelling among Adults” was conducted at the Community Science College and Research Institute, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Madurai. A total of 100 respondents were selected through random sampling method. Data were collected using a standardized questionnaire comprising socio-demographic information and statements related to awareness, attitudes and

practices regarding food labelling. The questionnaire was pre-tested among 15 participants to assess clarity and relevance. Based on the feedback obtained, necessary modifications were made before final administration. Awareness and attitude statements were assessed using a three-point scale consisting of Disagree (0), Not Sure (1) and Agree (2). Practices related to food label usage were assessed using a three-point scale consisting of Never (0), Sometimes (1) and Always (2). The collected data were analysed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, chi-square test and independent t-test.

Table 1. Details of selected respondents

Sl. No	PARAMETER	Respondents (N=100) Per cent
1.	Age (in years)	
	Less than 40	22.0
	40 to 50	45.0
	50 above	33.0
2.	Gender	
	Female	49.0
	Male	51.0
3.	Education	
	Read & write	28.0
	Primary	8.0
	Secondary	11.0
	University	53.0

Table 1 presents the details of the selected participants. Among them, 45% were aged 40–50 years, followed by 33% aged over 50 years and 22% aged under 40 years. The mean age was 46.65 years. Gender distribution was almost equal, with 51% males and 49% females. Educational status revealed that 53% had university education, 28% were able to read and write, 11% had secondary education, and 8% had primary education.

Awareness of Respondents Regarding Food Label Components

Respondent's awareness varied across different food label components. Awareness was highest for product name and production/expiry date, while awareness regarding nutrition facts, ingredient lists, storage instructions and country of origin was comparatively low.

Table 2. Awareness of Respondents Regarding Food Label Components

Food Label Component	Respondents (N=100) (percent)
Product Name	86
Production/Expiry Date	83
Manufacturer Information	49
Nutrition Facts	35
Ingredient List	34
Instructions for Use	29
Storage Instructions	19
Country of Origin	18

The findings indicate that consumers focus mainly on food safety and product identification information. Educational status and income level significantly influenced awareness of food label information.

Attitude Towards Food Labelling

Respondents showed a positive attitude towards food labelling. Most participants (63%) believed that all food products should be labelled, while only 14% felt that food labelling was

unnecessary. More than half of the respondents (57%) considered current food labels informative. However, 78% reported that important information such as manufacturing and expiry dates is often printed in very small letters, making labels difficult to read. Additionally, 38% supported the use of colourful and easy-to-understand front-of-pack labels. Overall, consumers valued food labels but suggested improvements in readability and presentation.

Practices Regarding Food Labelling

Food label reading practices differed among respondents. Most respondents reported checking information related to food safety and product identification before purchasing packaged foods. However, detailed nutritional information was less frequently consulted. Age and income significantly influenced ingredient-reading behaviour, whereas gender showed no significant association.

Table 3. Information Checked on Food Labels During Purchase

Information Checked	Respondents (N=100) Per cent
Production/Expiry Date	64
Product Name	53
Net Quantity	47
Manufacturer Name	27
Instructions for Use	20
Ingredient List	14
Nutrition Facts	14
Storage Instructions	11
Country of Origin	11

Food label reading practices differed among respondents. Most participants reported checking information related to food safety and product identification before purchasing packaged foods. However, detailed nutritional information was less frequently consulted. Age and income significantly influenced ingredient-reading behaviour, whereas gender showed no significant association.

Reasons for Reading Food Labels

The main reason for reading food labels was to choose healthier foods (38%). Other reasons included avoiding high-fat foods (30%), avoiding high-sugar foods (30%), managing food allergies or intolerances (29%), preventing food-related diseases (28%) and avoiding high-salt foods (27%). These findings indicate growing consumer concern about health and nutrition.

Challenges in Food Label Utilization

Despite positive attitudes towards food labelling, several challenges continue to limit effective utilization. Many respondents reported several barriers to effective use of food labels, including difficulty understanding technical terms, small font sizes, lack of interest and time constraints. These factors often prevent consumers from fully utilizing nutritional information provided on food packages.

Conclusion

Food labels play an important role in helping consumers make informed food choices and promoting healthier dietary practices. The present study revealed moderate awareness, positive attitudes and selective food label reading practices among consumers. While product names and production/expiry dates were widely recognized and frequently checked, nutrition facts and ingredient information received comparatively less attention. The study also showed that age, education and income significantly influenced food label awareness and utilization. Consumers mainly used food labels for health-related reasons, including choosing healthier

foods and preventing diet-related diseases. However, factors such as lack of understanding, small font sizes and limited interest reduced the effective use of food label information. Overall, the findings highlight the need for nutrition education programmes and simplified, user-friendly food labels to improve consumer understanding. Enhancing food label literacy can support healthier food choices and contribute to better public health outcomes.

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