

MOTHERS' TRUST AND ITS ROLE IN ADOPTING FUNCTIONAL FOODS FOR CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Health and nutrition are a concern for both government, consumers and food industry. This research is helping to explain the purchasing behaviour of functional foods by testing a conceptual model that examines a set of antecedents (Affective reward, quality of information, social approval) of mothers' confidence in functional food intended for their young children.

Keywords: Functional Food, Mother-child relationship, Trust, Affective Reward, Information's Quality, Social Approval.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, nutrition has become a public health issue in most Western countries, since it is at the root of many chronic diseases; such as (obesity, diabetes, among others). States then try to change people's habits through advertising and awareness campaigns. The recent nutritional shift has stimulated research to produce new food that minimize the risk of diseases and improve well-being and health (Roberfroid, 2002; Doyon 2008). As a result, there is a growing demand to progress from improving life quality and wellness (Roberfroid, 2002; Doyon 2008).

It is in this context that the concept of functional food has emerged. Functional Foods (FFs) represent one of the most interesting areas of research and innovation in the food industry (Azzurra & Riccardo, 2011; Doyon & Labrecque, 2008; Jones & Jew, 2007; Schaafsma & Kok, 2005; Sirò, et al., 2008).

In this study, we look at Functional foods for young children, for having such specifications this type of food is the subject of sustained attention from consumers. In particular, the mother is always looking for the well-being of her child, she is concerned about the credibility of the promises displayed on the packaging.

In this respect, Cox (2008) highlighted the crucial role of trust as a crucial factor in the purchase of functional food, where the "health" effect can only be measured after the consumption experience.

The concept of trust has been the subject of several research studies in the food industry. Gurviez (2001) was interested in brand confidence. Marouseau (2004) and Pichon (2006) studied confidence in agri-food players. Other researchers, mainly Andreani et al. (2010), have created a new form of trust, linked to a particular product category in the world of health.

Little research has focused on the determinants of trust in functional foods for children aged 2-7. Despite the complexity of this segment, it was considered interesting because of its specificity.

The present research explores the determinants of mothers' confidence in purchasing functional foods for their young children.

First, the concept presented in the literature and the research model are reviewed, then the results are analysed and the findings are presented, lastly, future research inputs and directions are suggested.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding the processes involved in the act of food consumption has long been the subject of interest of researchers from various backgrounds including philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, biologists and more recently marketing experts.

This research focuses on a particular product category with a strong health image. To understand mothers' behaviour with regard to the purchase these products, several factors lead us to explore three antecedents of trust in a healthy food which are: the quality of information at the cognitive level, the reward at the emotional level and the social approval at the normative level.

We also incorporated two other variables that may affect health nutrition behaviour which are: perceived risk and attitude. The dependent variable here is the intention to re-purchase functional foods.

Confidence: A key Concept of Dietary Behaviour Related to Health

The most effective approaches towards understanding the risk reduction strategies during a purchasing process are those based on the notion of trust (Pichon; 2006).

The majority of research conducted on this field (Gurviez, 1999; Gurviez and Korchia, 2002, Sirieix and Dubois, 1999; Pichon, 2003) have relied on the brand to define trust. The emergence of a broader approach to trust is therefore necessary (Sirieix and Dubois, 1999).

Andreani et al. (2014) propose a conceptualization and a measure of confidence in the drug much closer to our concerns than those used for consumer products. They distinguish five dimensions that, in addition to the notions of reliability, credibility and innovation, highlight the quality of information and respect for the environment perceived.

Antecedents of Confidence in Functional Foods

Affective Reward is the pleasure felt by the consumer after consuming a healthy food (Urala and Lahthenmaki, 2004). The hedonic dimension goes far beyond the organoleptic properties, it is the "*pleasure of healthy eating*" (Urala and Lahthenmaki, 2004; Labrecque et al, 2007).

H₁: Affective Reward positively influences confidence in functional foods (FFs).

The Quality of the Information According to Grunert and Wills (2007), the consumer perception of nutritional information has a positive and significant impact on food choices. Other authors such as Dan Kim et al. (2007) and Andréani et al. (2014) show that sources of information are an important determinant of trust.

H₂: The quality of information positively influences trust in functional foods (FFs).

The Social Approval Literature reveals that studies conducted on health behaviours such as (Urala and Lahthenmaki, 2004; Dubé et al, 2005; Siro et al, 2008) show that the orientation towards functional foods is explained not only by the desire to control one's personal health but also by the need for social approval, be judged favourably by others by one's behaviour or physical appearance (Martin, 1984).

H₃: Social approval positively influences confidence in FFs

In food consumption, confidence is intimately linked to the perception of risk and plays an important role in its reduction (Gurviez, 2001; Pichon, 2006; El Ourabi et al, 2006) This crucial role is confirmed by El Ourabi et al. (2006) which considered it to be a key variable in the expression of the intention to purchase functional foods.

H₄: Confidence in FFs has a negative impact on perceived risk towards functional foods.

The relationship between perceived risk and attitude is well established in the literature in different areas (Stone and Mason, 1995; Brunel and Gallen, 2012).

H₅: Perceived risk to FFs negatively affects attitudes towards FFs

According to the model of the theory of reasoned action of Ajzen and Fishbein (1977), attitude is a determinant of the intention to purchase.

H₆: Attitude towards FFs positively affects the purchasing intention of FFs.

Based on the hypothetical Siegrist (2000) model applied in the field of genetic technology, trust having a major role in the acceptance of new products, measured by the purchasing intention.

According to Lafferty et al. (2002), there is a direct link between trust and the consumer's behavioural intention.

Contrast, Siegrist (2000) demonstrated that the relationship between trust and purchasing intention is not direct and that trust has an indirect positive effect on the purchasing intention through perceived risk.

H₇: Trust in FFs indirectly affects the purchasing intention of FFs

Results and Discussion

The conceptual model was tested using structural equation models. We used the Bootstrap procedure on 200 samples.

A review of the evidence shows that our conceptual model presents a satisfactory adjustment as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 GLOBAL MODEL ADJUSTMENT INDEX										
	X ² (ddl)	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA	RMR	TLI	CFI	NFI	IFI	X ² /ddl
Acceptance threshold	-	>0.9	>0.9	<0.1		>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	[1 ,5]
M1	1056.30	0.862	0.831	0.063	0.077	0.887	0.901	0.850	0.902	2.602

According to the conceptual framework, it appears that emotional gratification has a positive effect on confidence in functionally foods ($\beta=0.280$; $p=0.011$). In this case, the pleasure felt comes from the well-being and maternal emotions associated with caring for their children. The test of the effect of the quality of information on confidence confirms the H2 hypothesis ($\beta=0.486$; $p=0.011$). The quality of information is therefore a determining factor in confidence in FFs.

Contrary to what was expected, the hypothesis of social approval H3 was rejected. Social approval has no effect on trust in FFs. This finding seems surprising given the large number of studies highlighting the importance of this variable in the consumption of functional foods (Dubé et al, 2005).

H4 the hypothesis tests the effect of confidence in FFs on the perceived risk to these foods reveals that trust in FFs does not affect perceived risk.

H5 the hypothesis examines the relationship between perceived risk to FFs and attitudes towards FFs is confirmed ($p=0.000$). This leads to the conclusion that Perceived Risk Negatively Affects Attitude towards FFs.

H6 the hypothesis concerns the effect of the attitude towards ASOF on the intention to re-purchase these foods. The test result states that the attitude towards FFs does not affect the FFs' re-purchase intention.

H7 the hypothesis test shows that trust in FFs does not affect the FFs' re-purchase intention.

The results found show that the direct link between trust and the intention to re-purchase is not significant ($P=0.154>0.05$). On the other hand, the indirect effect of trust on purchasing intention is significant.

Conclusion

Traditionally, functional foods are aimed at a wide range of consumers with a variety of eating behaviours (El Dhara, 2007). This research is one of the few academic studies that have attempted to identify the antecedents of trust in a functional food (FF) in the particular context of the mother-child relationship.

The results concluded that emotional gratification and the quality of information are the main antecedents of trust in FF, while social approval has no significant effect.

In addition to utilitarian and functional attributes, communication on healthy foods must also be based on the hedonic and emotional dimensions that create a sense of pleasure in the consumer.

The majority of marketing studies point to the idea that the quality of information contributes to restoring consumer confidence in the agri-food sector (Labrecque et al, 2006).

To promote the "health" attribute, in the case of a healthy food intended for an infant. It is necessary to communicate both on utilitarian qualities, nutritional intake and positive effect on health, and hedonic considerations related to the emotional gratification released when eating the healthy food or Functionals Food: good mood, harmony between soul and body, psychological pleasure of the mother.

Our study shows that trust is indeed a cardinal virtue in the consumption of healthy foods. Although confidence in our data does not reduce the perceived risk to FFs (non-significant test), we have shown that trust have a strong and indirect influence on purchasing intentions.

From all these reflections, we can conclude that food security is a dominant variable in the formation of attitude and the intention to re-purchase functional foods.

It is therefore recommended that social networks be established for functional food brands where mothers can learn from professionals and exchange ideas with other members of the network.

Limitations

The study results may not be general is able. However, it will be interesting to test the proposed propositions further in another context.

Future research might be interested in studying the moderating effects of variables such as health awareness and involvement in a product category, and control beliefs. Such studies would certainly provide a better understanding of the behaviour of mothers and more widely of individuals with regard to Functionals Foods.

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