

## **How Consumers Perceive Health and Nutritional Information and How It Affects Their Purchasing Behavior: Comparative Study between Colombia and the Dominican Republic**

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**Abstract :** There are some factors affecting consumer decision-making regarding the use of the front of package labels in order to find benefits to the well-being of the human being. Currently, there are several labels that help influence or change the purchase decision for food products. These labels communicate the impact that food has on human health; therefore, consumers are more critical and intelligent when buying and consuming food products. The research explores the association between front-of-pack labeling and food choice; the association between label content and purchasing decisions is complex and influenced by different factors, including the packaging itself. The main objective of this study was to examine the perception of health labels and nutritional declarations and their influence on buying decisions in the non-alcoholic beverages sector. This comparative study of two developing countries will show how consumers take nutritional labels into account when deciding to buy certain foods. This research applied a quantitative methodology with correlational scope. This study has a correlational approach in order to analyze the degree of association between variables. Likewise, the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) method and structural equation modeling (SEM) as a powerful multivariate technique was used as statistical technique to find the relationships between observable and unobservable variables. The main findings of this research were the obtaining of three large groups and their perception and effects on nutritional and wellness labels. The first group is characterized by taking an attitude of high interest on the issue of the imposition of the nutritional information label on products and would agree that all products should be packaged given its importance to preventing illnesses in the consumer. Likewise, they almost always care about the brand, the size, the list of ingredients, and nutritional information of the food, and also the effect of these on health. The second group stands out for presenting some interest in the importance of the label on products as a purchase decision, in addition to almost always taking into account the characteristics of size, money, components, etc. of the products to decide on their consumption and almost always they are never interested in the effect of these products on their health or nutrition, and in group 3, it differs from the others by being more neutral regarding the issue of nutritional information labels, and being less interested in the purchase decision and characteristics of the product and also on the influence of these on health and nutrition. This new knowledge is essential for different companies that manufacture and market food products because they will have information to adapt or anticipate the new laws of developing countries as well as the new needs of health-conscious consumers when they buy food products.

**Keywords :** healthy labels, consumer behavior, nutritional information, healthy products

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