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PaperTitle **A Qualitative Investigation into Student Consumers' Decision Making Process of Food Products Containing Limited Label Information**

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ABSTRACT

Many student consumers obtain food products with a limited amount of label information (limited label information products (LLIP)) from cafeterias. Since labeling serves as an information source during consumers' decision making process, it is uncertain how student consumers make LLIP purchasing decisions. Therefore, the objectives of this study were to determine student consumers' decision making process when confronted with LLIP and propose a decision making model for these purchases.

A qualitative research approach was used to obtain information of student consumers' LLIP decision making process, using semi-structured interviews and a vignette scenario. The Klipooog Cafeteria of the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) was used as the study location. Students were questioned on their use of label information during their LLIP decision making process.

Students with an interest in label information had specific minimum label information requirements for LLIP when searching for product information. When confronted with LLIP, students evaluated these products based on the available label information, personal factors (e.g. time limitations, product experience) and physical product factors (e.g. healthiness, freshness). This information was incorporated in a proposed decision making model that student consumers used when purchasing LLIP. This model could be used by retailers and manufacturers to enable a better understanding of student consumers to allow them to cater for their specific needs. Retailers and manufacturers should ensure that LLIP for this consumer market comply with the specifications of this model to ease consumers' decision making process, while also catering for students' minimal label information requirements.