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ILLUSTRATING CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIORS FROM THE NUTRITION KNOWLEDGE PERSPECTIVE WHEN SELECTING FOOD FOR WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PURPOSES IN REAL-LIFE SUPERMARKET SETTING

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For the majority, health and nutritional issues are important food selection criteria. The aim was to study a real-life setting in collecting data and simultaneously to examine consumers purchasing behavior from the nutrition knowledge perspective when selecting food for weight management. The subjects were obtained by collecting 1000 questionnaires in November-December 2009 at the K-Citymarket Kolmisoppi, Kuopio. The subjects (n=36, age 18-65) were selected to represent consumers of varied experience in weight management. The shopping experiment of subjects was studied using verbal analysis protocol combined with wireless audio-visual observation, nutrition surveys and interviews in the K-Citymarket in April-May 2010. The subjects received the same shopping list twice. During the first round, they were asked to select a product they usually buy and during the second round, a product they would use for weight management. According to the verbalizations and quantified results obtained from nutrition knowledge survey, there was a wide variation of nutrition knowledge among consumers. Also the level of nutrition knowledge was related to a total energy reduction in products selected and in order of product's selection time. Weight management oriented consumers were not a homogenous group. There were different sub-groups who appreciated and followed different food selection practices in a supermarket setting. Orientations for food selection from the weight management perspective varied whilst taste-, price- and knowledge-oriented perspectives dominated in food selection. Therefore, it is essential to understand and give support for different consumer segments for providing them more successful weight management outcomes in a long run.

Biography

Anna-Maria Saarela is a senior research lecturer, a facilitator of the Future Food RDI Hub Finland and FP7-project manager at Savonia University of Applied Sciences. Anna-Maria has competence in international projects, food product development, consumer behavior and multidimensional research approaches. She developed a method verbal analysis protocol combined with wireless audio-visual observation in real-life settings. Anna-Maria has over 16 years' experience in educating, supervising thesis (> 50), carrying scientific projects with industry and academia. Anna-Maria is an active writer and has published several scientific peer-reviewed papers.

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