

The project aims to determine how health-related information provided through claims, symbols, labels and quality signs can affect consumer attitudes and food purchase intentions as well as to contextualise the consumer behaviour issues in the broader picture of the entire system of food production and distribution. We plan to provide evidence on how Polish consumers form opinions about the healthfulness of food products and how they interpret health claims in this regard. We will examine differences in consumer motivation and ability to process health-related claims and symbols as well as differences in consumers' nutritional and health status that may have an impact on whether food products with specific health effects will be beneficial. We are going to assess familiarity with and attitudes towards selected health claims in Poland. We aim to establish the extent to which the inclusion of health logos impacts consumer and retailer perceptions of healthiness over and above the provision of a basic label containing numerical nutritional information alone. We will explore the role of Internet, especially company websites and social media, in communicating with the public and assisting consumers in making informed and healthy food choices. This will lead to the identification of new communication tools for information provision on health claims in Poland. Based on our research findings, best practices for the provision of health claims in food marketing will be identified.

We begin with a thorough and comprehensive literature review, which will serve us to design survey questionnaires. We analyse official documents and legal acts referring to the use of health claims in food marketing. We have identified 3 key categories of respondents: managers of food-processing enterprises, distributors (wholesalers and retailers) and consumers. The results obtained in quantitative analyses will be used to select and fine-tune questions to be asked in individual in-depth interviews. Information obtained from food processors and distributors will help us to design the questionnaire to be addressed to Polish consumers. The results stemming from the qualitative parts of our research in conjunction with an analysis of selected company websites will be used to construct a series of case studies aiming to present the best practices. In our research, we plan to apply selected measurement scales used in the world literature of the subject concerning the role of health-related claims in food marketing and consumption.

In order to address the current and growing burden of diet-related disease, the World Health Organization has highlighted nutrition as a key risk factor. The concept of informed choice within the food domain has become synonymous with encouraging consumers towards healthier choices with the provision of nutrition information. Nutrition labelling hold important potential in enabling consumers to identify food products that are in line with their dietary requirements, and helping them assess a product's healthiness. At the same time, nutrition and health claims are strong marketing incentives for the food industry, providing opportunities for product differentiation based on health-related positioning. Although the process of approval for the use of health claims is highly regulated in the European Union, consumer understanding, acceptance and use of such claims is less clear.