

Pan-European Consumer Research on European consumers' nutrition knowledge & in- store behaviour, understanding and use of nutrition information on food labels

The pan-European study has been conducted in six EU markets – UK, France, Germany, Sweden, Poland and Hungary.

Study Design and Methodology

EUFIC has worked with Professor Klaus Grunert of Aarhus School of Business, in Denmark, for the study. He has been involved in the study design and methodology, questionnaire design, briefing of Market Research agencies in each country, data analysis, conclusions, presentation of results, and preparing of manuscripts for submission to peer-reviewed journals.

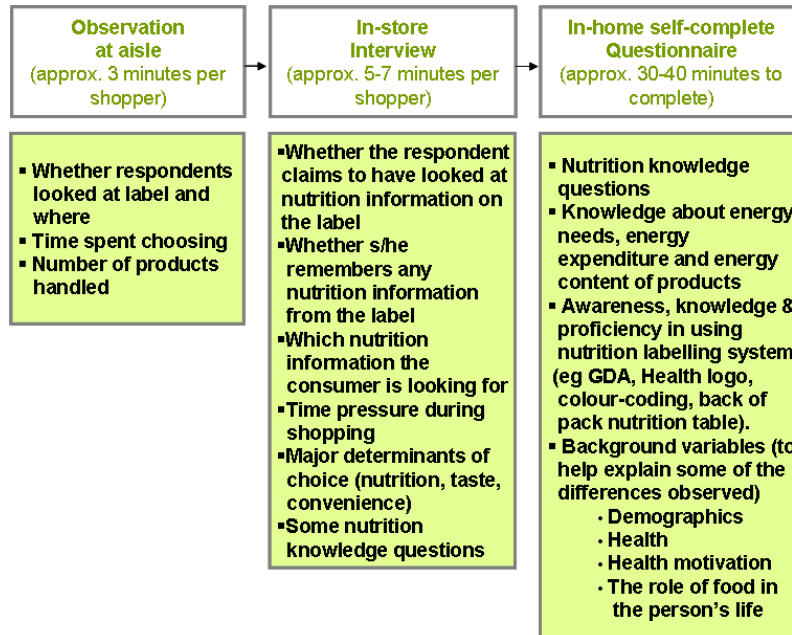
The research protocol was shared with key stakeholder groups from the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. Their feedback was considered in the design of the questions.

Pilot studies to test the questionnaires (understanding of questions by respondents, correct coding of answers by interviewers, level of incentivised responses, time taken to complete in-store interview and in-home questionnaire etc), were conducted in the UK, in November 2007 and January/February 2008, and resulted in some amendments of the protocol for the store observations, interviewer briefing, and design of questionnaires.

For each country, the sample size is approximately 1,800 in-store observations and interviews, to reach a target of about 1,000 completed and returned questionnaires that are filled in by the respondent at home (or in the store in some countries). Shoppers were observed at 6 product categories: salty snacks, soft drinks, yoghurts, breakfast cereals, ready meals and confectionery. The interviews were conducted in different retailers (covering the main labelling schemes in the country), during weekdays and weekends throughout the duration of the day, and in different locations to have a representative sample of the shopper population.

The study design is represented in the schematic below.

Summary Study Design and Questionnaire Content



Measurement of Consumer Nutrition Knowledge

Nutrition knowledge was measured to gauge the level of understanding of nutrition information provided on labelling systems. The instrument used was developed based on previously validated and published nutrition knowledge questionnaires, and questions asked in previous UK Food Standards Agency studies. These 10 questions were adapted slightly between countries, to allow for cultural differences in food and drink consumption. The answers to the nutrition knowledge questions enabled us to develop a nutrition index, which was used for comparisons, and assessing against demographic variables.

UK Study

The UK study was conducted in April/May 2008, in 3 major UK retailers, that use 3 types of Front of Pack (FOP) labelling schemes:

Tesco Stores: Guideline Daily Amounts (GDA)
 Sainsbury's: Traffic lights (TL)
 ASDA: GDA/TL hybrid system.

The selection of these systems was based upon penetration of the schemes, and co-operation from the retailers. We are grateful for the retailer co-operation.

Different stores in 3 different locations (London, Manchester, Birmingham) of the UK were selected, to provide a good demographic spread. There were 2019 in-store interviews, with an even distribution across all 6 product categories. There were 921 returned in-home questionnaires. There is a higher proportion of females, which reflects the relative number of

female shoppers (26%:74% male:female in-store interviews, and 19%:81% returned questionnaires). There was good demographic spread across all socio-demographic groups. Approximately 37% of respondents had children under 16 years old living in the same household. There was good demographic spread across age-groups.

France Study

The French study was conducted in August/September 2008, in 2 major retailers (Intermarché & Auchan) that use different types of labelling schemes (Auchan uses GDA front of pack & Intermarche uses colour-coding and GDAs on the back of pack - Nutripass):

Different stores in 5 different locations (Longvy, Evreux, Paris region, St Herblain, Bordeaux region) in France were selected, to provide a good demographic spread. There were 2337 in-store interviews, with an even distribution across all 6 product categories. There were 838 returned in-home questionnaires. There was a higher proportion of females, which reflects the relative number of female shoppers (24 %: 76% male/female in-store interviews, and 18%:82% male/female returned questionnaires). There was a good demographic spread across all socio-demographic groups and age groups. Approximately 43 % of respondents had children under 16 years old living in the same household.

Germany Study

The German study was conducted in August/September 2008, in 2 major retailers (Lidl & Metro/Real) that use front of pack GDA labels

Different stores in 3 different locations (Berlin, Nürnberg, Köln) in Germany were selected to provide a good demographic spread. There were 1810 in-store interviews with an even distribution across all 6 products. There were 550 returned in-home questionnaires. There was a higher proportion of females, which reflects the relative number of female shoppers. There was a good demographic spread across all socio-demographic groups and age groups. Approximately 29 % of respondents had children under 16 years old living in the same household.

Poland Study

The Polish study was conducted in September 2008, in 2 major retailers (Tesco & Real) that use GDA labels front of pack;

Different stores in 3 different locations (Warszawa, Katowice, Lublin) in Poland were selected to provide a good demographic spread. There were 1800 in-store interviews with an even distribution across all 6 products. There were 1494 returned in-home questionnaires. There was a higher proportion of females, which reflects the relative number of female shoppers (30 %/ 70% male/female in-store interviews and in 30%:70% returned questionnaires). There was a good demographic spread across all socio-demographic groups and age groups. Approximately 38 % of respondents had children under 16 years old living in the same household.

Hungary Study

The Hungarian study was conducted in September 2008, in 2 major retailers (Tesco & Interspar) using GDA labels front of pack;

Different stores in 3 different locations (Budapest, Debrecen, Pécs) in Hungary were selected to provide a good demographic spread. There were 1804 in-store interviews with an even distribution across all 6 products. There were 703 returned in-home questionnaires. There was a higher proportion of females, which reflects the relative number of female shoppers (32 % male/68%female in-store interviews and in 27 %:73% returned questionnaires). There was a good demographic spread across all socio-demographic groups and age groups. Approximately 23 % of respondents had children under 16 years old living in the same household.

Sweden Study

The Sweden study was conducted in September 2008, in 3 major retailers (ICA, COOP & AXFOOD) that use both Swedish keyhole and GDA labels front of pack.

Different stores in 3 different locations (Stockholm, Göteborg, Linköping) in Sweden were selected to provide a good demographic spread. There were 1858 in-store interviews with an even distribution across all 6 products. There were 1201 returned in-home questionnaires. There was a good balance between female and male shoppers (41%:59% male/female in-store interviews and in 38%:62% male/female returned questionnaires). There was a good demographic spread across all socio-demographic groups and age groups. Approximately 36 % of respondents had children under 16 years old living in the same household.