UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

Faculty of Social Sciences

School of Economics and Business Administration

Arman Altynkhan

MANIPULATION IN MARKETING: ACCEPTANCE OF DECEPTIVE FOOD LABELS

Bachelor Thesis

Supervisor: Anne Reino, Associate Professor

Tartu 2022

I have written this Research paper/Bachelor Thesis independently. Any ideas or data taken from other authors or other sources have been fully referenced.

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Introduction

Marketing is one of the key elements of any successful business enterprises. As a part of a strong campaign, marketers try to have a strong and lasting impact on consumer needs. However, many companies have their own interests and goals, which in many cases are far from what costumer want, and quite frequently they do not want to create solutions that could avoid misleading purchasers (Danciu, 2014).

In general, false advertising creates a negative attitude by consumers. Many studies claim that once a company turns out to be a deceptive, the future process of buying a product from a consumer perspective will change significantly (Darke & Ritchie, 2007). This will eventually cause a negative impact on the image for consumers and the company in the long run. Therefore, if companies adhere to basic ethical standards in a marketing campaign that would potentially lead to a positive image in the long term (Chaouachi & Benrached, 2019).

This thesis' problem is how companies use various advertising methods on food labels to manipulate consumers and determine whether misleading food labels affect their decision. Author of current theses is aiming a career that focuses on marketing analytics; hence this question will be important to the author to understand since it is imperative to recognize the possible dilemmas that some people may face in this industry, such as uncertainty and moral conflicts throughout a career like whether to promote manipulative tactics to get a profit or rather instead avoid it.

In the usual course of events, consumers constantly face various type advertisement on a regular basis, the author intends to obtain the general perception of food labelling and whether they accept or avoid deceptive labels. Since food is considered the most advertised commodity in the United States, accounting for more than 70% of all advertising promotions (Santiago, Choi, Mela, & Leary, 2019). On the grounds of this, to get people's attention, many companies emphasize specific ingredients on packaging to make their brands seem superior to their rivals. One of the most known examples is the terms "sugar-free", "healthy", and "wholesome" have been manipulated to connect certain labels to foods that can help people enjoy a healthier consumption choice (Viola, Bianchi, Croce, & Ceretti, 2016).

At the same time, according to (Janssen & Hamm, 2011), most customers are unaware of the precise definition of words on products such as "organic," "n% of fiber," or "GMO free". It would be important to raise public awareness about food product labelling. Every customer has the right to know what is in their food.

The aim of the study is understanding the perception of deceptive food labels, namely determine when people accept and avoid products with misleading labels.

The research objectives of this thesis are:

- define the differences between deception and manipulation;
- bring out the studies that were conducted to understand people's perception and acceptance of deceptive labels;
- identify the types of deceptive labels and explain the relevance in marketing;
- define the formation of consumers attitude towards the product;
- carry out empirical study on acceptance and perception of deceptive food labels, which will be conducted in the form of a survey;
- make a conclusion of survey and theoretical analysis of how people respond to products with misleading labels in Estonia.

This study fills the gap of studies of perception of misleading labels in Estonia. With age category of 20 and 34. The reason this age group chosen is because, according to several studies from the US, it has concluded that 51% people in the US from this age category seek healthier food and pay the most attention to food labels (Buchholz, 2019). Therefore, making this age group the most appropriate to work with. In addition, many research were conducted in the United States and Western Europe, in the meantime there is not enough information about consumer's perception of misleading food labels in Estonia.

Evidently, studying possible violations of ethics in marketing and understanding the level of customer satisfaction is paramount for a person who wants to work in this field. Because of that, this obstacle is relevant for both consumers and company representatives. The author believes that there are alternative ways to implement the idea of selling products, and the buyer should not only be treated as a "wallet". This could potentially raise awareness that manipulating people to spend money is no longer appropriate in today's society. Due to the demands of the priority of political correctness and a strong voice of customers, marketing campaigns are constantly being adjusted (Vries, 2017). Certainly, it can be helpful in informing people about all the possible deceptive tactics that customers face every day, in addition, for students who want to focus their career on the field of marketing.

It is critical to understand customer perceptions and feedback on food label deception. People may have varying perspectives on label deception. Starting from people who are aware of deceptive tactics, they stop reading front label, and mainly focus on ingredient part and the quality of the products, while other part of costumers is simply unaware of it, so it's important to know their attitudes towards this how misleading information are being affected.

Keywords: Estonia, food products, misleading labels, deceptive advertising, ethics in marketing and manipulation.

1. Theoretical aspect of deceptive marketing

In this theoretical chapter the author proceeds with differentiating definitions of certain keywords. Since in this thesis, the author will use terms such as "deceptive", "manipulative", "false", "misleading" advertisements, and labels. To avoid confusion, the following definitions are given to show the correlation of meanings between selected words, so they can be safely used as synonyms. After that author in details describes the aspects of deceptive marketing that are commonly used by companies to deceive people. And elaborates the formation of the decision-making process of costumers.

1.1. Concepts of deception and manipulation

Many food labels, while promoting their products as healthy, tend to mislead consumers, resulting more harm rather good (Johnson, 2012). The Independent Federal Trade Commission (FTC) of the United States of America has a mission to protect consumers from market fraud. The FTC accurately describes unfair practices. Specifically, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTCA) section 5, deceptive practice is defined as "An act or practice may be found to be deceptive if there is a representation, omission, or practice that misleads or is likely to mislead the consumer." (Federal Trade Commission Act, 2016, p. 8). As a result, the FTC straightforwardly states that any actions that directly mislead people are considered deceptive practices.

In comparison next two authors greatly defined the fraudulent advertisement. The authors defined and linked deceptive advertisement with misleading practice. To compare with one the of the legal concealing services "Legal Match" authors also linked the terms of deception with misleading and false advertising by stating that deceptive/false advertisements are considered to be false when it attempts to deceive or mislead people (LaMance & Rivera, n.d.). Consequently, comparing these definitions give a clear picture of how those terms are closely related.

In case of misleading and manipulative terms, there are a bit more differences. It is important to note that these words cannot be used synonymously, however, both terms are closely related. In the following article that was written about manipulative advertising, next author brought up a good definition, which stated the intentions of gaining any benefits for own sake by doing with unfair practices is considered (Wroblewski, 2018). Therefore, the main difference in comparison is that by pressuring people to buy the product they already wanted by adding additional values is a manipulative practice (Aaron, n.d.).

All definitions of manipulative marketing have a common basis that influences decision-making in misleading ways. Table 1 and 2 provide the summary all the definitions of deception and manipulations in marketing by different authors.

Table 1

Summary of comparison of the deceptive marketing term

Author & Year	Interpretation of deceptive marketing
Cohen, (1974)	Deception can be false or partially false. Advertisements that provide insufficient information that leads to wrong interpretations.
Sher, (2011)	Deception and manipulation are interrelated. The target audience can be manipulated by influencing their choices through deception tactics.
Serota, (2019)	Advertisers use deception to convince consumers and portray a product as superior to other products.

Source: Compiled by author based on the references in the table.

In table 2 you can see the comparison of interpretation between deceptive and manipulative marketing. In general, we can see that there are certain similarities between two terminologies, however there are still clear differences in the usage of these words.

Table 2

Summary of comparison of the manipulative marketing term

Author & Year	Interpretation of manipulative marketing
Kamins, (2018)	Marketing manipulations is strategy that encompasses human cognitive relationships. It used to influence the decision-making process of consumers.
Sher, (2011)	Author also links marketing manipulation with the decision-making process. It occurs when certain tactics are designed to interrupt the purchasing process by playing on the vulnerabilities of ordinary people.
Khurram, (2018)	The concept of non-manipulation is a practice that does not abuse the characteristics of the product and has specific features. Manipulative practice covers the negative features of the product and overuse the positive aspects to influence the decision-making process.

Source: Compiled by author based on the references in the table.

To compare with the authors' point of view, deception is a lie whilst convincing someone as the truth. As an example: a commercial that advertising organic food. In the US and the EU, organic is a legal term meaning that food is not sprayed with pesticides and is some distance from crops that are sprayed with pesticides. Nevertheless, just because the label says so, there are certain products that don't make it true, making it a deception by

manipulating a "legal" term that otherwise attracts customers. For that reason, it is safe to use both terms in such context.

However, considering the issue in more detail, it is necessary to consider the ethical point of view. As the theory of utilitarianism argues, that manipulation is neither good nor bad, while only the consequences of it make it right or wrong (Hendriks, et al., 2017). Moreover, according to the consequentialist theory, we can see how ethics can in certain way justify these manipulative outcomes by highlighting that it is technically a vital source of marketing employee income, as well organizational profit, and as a result income of the taxes for the economy. At the same time, in contras the concept of non-consequentialism, suggests treating customers only fairly, even if it could have negative consequences for the company's finances (Zielińska, 2015). Thus, it may contradict the theory of capitalism in which we live.

To comprehend the reasons why misleading campaigns are chosen by companies, we need to study the psychology of human behavior first. To provide clear credibility and understanding, Abraham Maslow developed a pyramid of human desires (Nguyen, 2019). In general, there are five main categories in the Maslow diagram that are necessary for most people to exist, and utilitarian desires belong to the category of the highest priorities. These include both objective and biological needs, which include clothing security, food necessity and shelter.

The next upper levels are acceptance by others and a key element is the psychological need to become the maximum that a person can be, so it has a huge impact on people's behavior. In other words, the psychological definition of a need is that is a trait that prompts a person to pursue a goal through an action that also gives purpose, meaning and direction to a person's behavior (David & Marta, 2009). Therefore, the psychological desires are the driving force for marketers. Once, specific tools are met to satisfy one of those needs, it can be successfully commercialized. As a result, author's focus will be on one of the one of the Maslow's needs – "the food necessity". In particular, the focus will be on deceptive labels on food products. For the reason marketers by provoking people's vulnerability with the right techniques try to barricade consumer's rational thinking and replaces it by decisions that are purely based on emotions (Christensen, 2014).

Clement, Smith, Zlatev, Gidlöf, & Weijer, (2017) noted that the images do not have a significant impact on consumer deception. As stated in their research, the pictures in the package are processed slower than the text, therefore it is easier to decode the information in the images. Whereas it is opposite to the interpretation of a text message that contains nutrition facts or numerical statements. In comparison, this assumption is supported by the

rate of court cases on label deception. According to another literature (Smith, Clement, Møgelvang-Hansen, & Selsøe, 2011), it has been reported that 87.6% of cases involving fraudulent packages were related to misrepresentation and omission of textual information, while 7.7% were about visual images on the package. In agreement with this logic, most cases of deception relate to the textual information on the label.

Overall, the concept of deception has been studied by various publications, many of whom have tried to explain the process of deception in product packages. The term "halo effect" has emerged, meaning that when consumers read text such as "organic" on a label, people may be confused about the product itself. This may lead customers to think that this text is perceived as a sign of a healthy and natural product used in the way they think they have made the right choice, but in fact, majority of the practices, have been part of the manipulation tactics (Menon, 1988). As well as the other authors also brought up similar definitions such as the halo effect is defined as a practice that leads people who aren't aware of the misleading labels that are claimed as "healthy" which will result choosing the wrong product, and in some cases overconsumption (Her & Seo, 2017). Another study also correlated "halo effect" to overeating process, namely in a study by (Wansink & Chandon, 2006) found that when people saw foods labeled "low-fat," they inclined to consume more.

Table 3

Summary of comparison of halo effect term.

Author & Year	Interpretation of halo effect
Wansink & Chandon, (2014)	The halo effect motivates people to recognize certain products as healthy, through various indicators such as nutrition claims, packaging, pricing, brand image, as well as product promotion and distribution.
Chandon & Wansink, (2007)	The halo effect misleads costumers to change their rational outlook in the wrong direction.
Raghunathan, Naylor & Hoyer, (2006)	Authors stated that halo effect makes people to inevitably divide food into healthy and unhealthy, bad and good, and the list goes on.
Her & Seo (2017)	The halo effect in the restaurant industry is misleading practice to doubt the actual number of calories that will lead to increased caloric intake

Source: Compiled by author based on the references in the table.

Overall, several studies conducted by different authors to give a better overview of halo-effect. According to the author, people who lead a healthy lifestyle are more vulnerable to halo-effect deception, and thus their level of consumption of deceptive foods is relatively high in comparison to people who don't lead healthy lifestyle (Her & Seo, 2017). At the same

time (Schuldt, Muller, & Schwarz, 2012), in their publication they gave an example of halo effect, they stated that the "organic" label on chips package makes consumers assume that chips contain significantly healthier that other chips. Besides from that they provided that other example of halo effect such as "low sodium" or "locally produced". Similar conclusion has been by (Sanbonmatsu, Kardes & Sansone, 1991), after conducting studies, authors stated halo effect works in the way that when people see labels "organic", "all natural" or "sugar free", costumers will feel more attracted to the product, in the meantime missing actual value of the product.

Table 4

Summary of terms.

Terms	Definitions	References
Marketing	Marketing is the process by which an organization promotes the purchase or sale of a good or service. Advertising, distributing, and supplying goods to customers or other companies are also examples of marketing. Affiliates do any promotions on behalf of an organization.	Deepak, Dhiraj & Abhinav, (2019)
Deceptive marketing	False or partly false information is referred to as deception. Furthermore, commercials that have inadequate detail, resulting in incorrect perceptions.	Cohen, (1974)
Manipulative marketing	Marketing manipulation is a technique that involves individual cognitive interactions. Advertisers use it to manipulate customers' decision-making processes.	Kamins, (2018)
Halo effect	Via numerous metrics such as nutrition statements, packaging, pricing, brand awareness, product marketing, and delivery, the halo effect motivates consumers to consider certain items as safer.	Wansink & Chandon, (2014)

Source: Compiled by author based on the references in the table.

In the meantime, these misleading campaigns have been the subject of heated debates and widely reported in media, research field and court cases. For instance, German tea company Teekanne GmbH & Co.KG ("Teekanne") came under fire after the release of 'Felix Himbeer-Vanille Abenteuer' tea (translated as "Felix Raspberry and Vanilla Adventure"). The packaging features vanilla flowers and raspberries, and label claimed that the tea has a "natural flavor" and "contains only natural ingredients." However, the German Consumer Organization (BVV) discovered that the ingredients in the tea did not match the list of ingredients listed on the label, so the tea did not contain vanilla and raspberry products.

Afterwards, the BVV has filed a lawsuit for misleading consumers. Consequently, the European Court ruled that the Felix Himber-Vanilla Abenteuer label was indeed deceptive and that the list of ingredients should be transparent (Schulteres, 2015). Moreover, misleading label occurred within Ferrero Deutschland company. Their label on the Nutella product claiming that the chocolate was high in vitamins, low in fat and sugar. As a result, a German court has ordered Nutella producers to replace misleading labels. Court says no to misleading Nutella labels. (2011).

To give an example of legal implications China fined Wal-Mart $ 114,500 for selling 63,573kg of regular pork that was falsely labeled as organic pork. Since 2006, Wal-Mart has been fined more than 21 times for selling misleading and overexaggerated labels, including cases when they were caught selling expired products that have been labeled as fresh. The same vague terminology was used by Nestlé, they claimed that their instant breakfast maintains the immune system and it was found that eating their products does not doesn't help immune system and does not prevent people from getting the flu or other illnesses (Borrelli, Patel, & Fagan, 2012).

As we see, marketing is one of the important parts any successful business. Therefore, many marketers try to create a lasting influence on consumer with the main goals to increase their sales, by doing so, in many cases companies choose to mislead people. It is important to take a note that deception in takes in different forms, where it takes in legal or illegal it considers as an unethical behavior.

1.2. Types of deceptive labels in marketing

According to publication's (Held & Germelmann, 2018), almost every product promoted by marketers is inclined to use any kind of deception to increase sales of services or products. Meanwhile, the companies that do not use any deceptive or manipulative tactics tend to have a larger market share compared to companies that use deceptions.

Types of marketing deception are a very broad and complex issue in marketing, sometimes elaboration is not easy (Serota, 2019). Many authors have tried to identify the types of deception. Nevertheless, the general concept of marketing deception does not differ from different literatures.

In the literature of (Xie & Boush, 2014), they classified deceptive marketing into three types: the first type is falsity, which can be interpreted as a lie. The second type is the omission that occurs when companies do not publish certain types of product information. Lastly is implication, this is a form of deception when people are misled by misconception the product. At the same time, in comparison to the literature of Xie and Boush, in various

studies (Serota, 2019; Hastak & Mazis, 2011; Chaouachi & Benrached, 2019), the authors suggested similar types of deceptive food labels in marketing, but in more details.

First type is "Omission of Material Facts" when a company ignores important facts and does not disclose sufficiently specific terms and does not leave information on the product. For example, in 1996, the FDA found that artificial fat substitutes, "Olestra" which can be added to foods such as chips, can eventually lead to gastrointestinal diseases (Serota, 2019). However, up to this day the brand does not mention these side effects and is still sold in the United States, although it is banned in the European Union and Canada (Kravitz, 2017).

The next is "Misleadingness Due to Semantic Confusion", where companies deliberately use obscure language and images to confuse consumers. The author of the research gave a very good example, such practices occur when companies label a product with words such as "freshly frozen" or "freshly picked", which in a sense misperceives the product. Another example to compare is when advertisers label beer products as "premium" or label pizza products as "Italian pizza", which leads to the assumption that the quality of this beer or pizza is superior (Hastak & Mazis, 2011). The same situation can be addressed when companies put an Italian flag on pizza box, and it leaves people in assumptions whether Italian flag means that it made it Italy, or it is based on Italian recipe (Clement, Smith, Zlatev, Gidlöf, & Weijer, 2017).

This is followed by "Attribution Misleading," which occurs when companies highlight the product's "unique features" to appear better than other products in the eyes of consumers (Serota, 2019). For example, a German company Ferrero Deutschland, the Kinder Surprise chocolate was sold under misleading the label by stating that chocolate contains the good amount of calcium. However, the consumer rights protection group Foodwatch believes that a child needs to drink 13 bars to get the promised amount of calcium they need daily, which is equivalent to 48 cubic meters of sugar and half a packet of butter Court says no to misleading Nutella labels. (2011).

"The Inter attribute" then appears as a misleading type by specifying one feature of the product, resulting in consumers being deceived by the product as a whole and relying on one feature. For example, many companies use phrases such as 15% less fat, which makes people think that the chosen product is healthier than a product without the similar labels. Another common deception to compare is that the label contains the words "gluten-free", but in many cases, the product does not contain necessary gluten-free components (Hastak & Mazis, 2011).

Last one is "Source-based misleading" often occurs when companies in the process of promoting their products, and many advertisers endorse actors to play the role of an expert or representative in a particular industry to gain credibility (Hastak & Mazis, 2011).

In addition, the authors (Clement, Smith, Zlatev, Gidlöf, & Weijer, 2017) in their research offer a broad version of the typology of deception. According to the authors, the misleading label on packages may vary, in general, it is divided into easily identifiable and complex situations. An easily identifiable misleading is mostly incorrect information on the packaging, for example, the product contains a lot of fat, but it is labeled as "only 15% fat". In the meanwhile, when it comes to relatively difficult cases, it occurs when advertisers present the product as "30% less fat". With no indication how this 30% of less fat is. This potentially misleads people into thinking if this product is 30% less fat hence whether it is heathier comparing to similar products of other companies. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that online fraud is illegal, but not all practices considered a violation of the law, for example, a seller can advertise a computer and a monitor as a whole product, nevertheless they may mention in a small font in the corner of the frame that the products are sold separately which makes it technically legal practice, but it still misleading clients (Held & Germelmann, 2018).

Overall, there are five different types of deceptive labels on products, those types can be slightly different, nonetheless, all types carry the same message to make people into thinking that they are making the right decision-making choice and make their products to superior to their competitors while ignoring the ethics and health of costumers.

1.3. Studies of the misleading practices in marketing.

Abbott (1997) conducted a survey in the UK with no specific details about participants showed that 55% of people would like to see more information on a food label, while 44% would like to read simplified text rather than confusing terminology. At the same time, 35.5% of people wanted fewer numbers in the text, and 23.5% preferred to read symbols and pictures. While in a survey (Teisl & Levy,1997) it was found that 73% of participants said that their decisions were influenced by "healthy" claims on the label, however only 8% of that group admitted that these statements are believable.

Furthermore, a dozen studies were conducted with the aim of gaining a vivid understanding of the perception of health issues on food labels (Wandel, 1997), conducted a study, they compiled their study through a systematic qualitative interview with open-ended questions, they interviewed 25 urban households in Oslo, Norway. The aim of the study was to gain a vivid understanding of the perception of health issues on food labels. They

conducted a second study in which they interviewed more than 1,050 people across the country, the age of the participants was determined to be 15 years and older, while gender of participants was not mentioned. The aim of the study was to obtain a complete picture of the perception and evaluation of food labels. Accordingly, it was demonstrated that most of the participants had problems understanding the terminology contained in food labels, due to the recognition that the information was perceived as advanced.

Another experiment to compare with the previous examples, it had been conducted by the authors (Borrelli, Patel & Fagan, 2012) conducted an experiment at Rutgers University to gain insight into the effect of misleading labels on students. They wanted to see how the students would react to the product cards to understand which product attracted them the most. Students were given two types of cards and were asked to rate which food was the healthiest and most beneficial based on the label, without testing or knowing the nutritional content. And finally, they were asked whether their decision-making process is influenced by the food label on a daily basis, afterwards they wanted to understand if they read nutritional part of the labels when they shop as a result, they have been asked whether they read through the back side of the labels when they shop. Subsequently, the results showed what the authors expected, namely that they found that many of the respondents usually purchase products based on their experience, while only a small fraction of the participants read the information on the other side of the label.

At the same time, (Chaouachi & Benrached, 2019) the authors cited examples from various studies that explore this time the differences between men and women, as well as the older and younger generations in their perception of the interpretation of information in advertising. Research shows that men are less selective in formulating information while women analyze information in detail. As reported by research, it turns out that it is easier to mislead men than women through deceptive advertising. In the meanwhile, the exact age is not specified in the case study, it was noted that the younger generation have inclination to be more skeptical of the product label, therefore for young people it is easier to detect deception. Elderly, as well as uneducated, and unmarried people are the most vulnerable categories to misleading advertising.

These studies show overall attitude towards misleading advertisement. People do not tolerate and find it unethical when marketing attempts to manipulate them. Though, it was observed that marketing doesn't play a huge role in decision making process, most of the time people check the price first and quality later, while in the case if product considered luxurious, correspondents fall into manipulation of the brand name, therefore, label with

expensive brand name make people to pay additionally 50% more. As a result, these studies give a huge ethical perception of costumers.

    1.4. Formation of consumers' attitude.

    There have been a lot of research on attitude formation, and there have been several general theories about why consumers prefer certain foods over others. In publication by (Fazio, 1995) explained that consumer attitudes arise from certain associations from the past and general first impressions of the product. Whereas (Ivanova, 2013) claimed that the attitude of consumers arises from the emotional reaction that a certain product creates. At the same time, (Salomon, 1984), stated that descriptive information requires more processing effort than graphical information. In most cases, for many consumers would be difficult to form an attitude towards unfamiliar goods if they do not have prior knowledge or information (Ivanova, 2013).

    Overall, the main process formation of costumer attitude has been greatly described in the next study it has been noted that the consumer attitude has three main stages of formation. First is "cognition", when the people initially form beliefs, thoughts that can be associated with the product. In most cases, prejudice arises at this stage. Later, "affect" sets in, when purchasers begin to experience feelings, emotions that will be evaluated in relation to a particular product, and last - "behavior" when they behave in a certain way, for example, avoid shopping, recommend others, and become a loyal customer. At the same time, the authors continue to note that any type of attitude can be changed both in the negative and in the positive direction. And the influences that change the general attitude formation tends to come from the media, the Internet, and the opinions of loved ones (Nnamdi, 2012).

    While in the research, two authors, mentioned the process of confirming consumer expectations. According to them, to confirm the consumer expectation, product performance must be eminently satisfactory to exceed customer expectations; or else dissatisfaction with the product can lead to negative denial (Burke, DeSarbo, Oliver. & Robertson, 1988).

    As one of the reasons that could lead to alteration of costumer's attitude a (Darke & Ritchie, 2007) study describes that the attitude of the consumers will alter, if enterprises use common manipulation techniques such as use high-pressure selling strategies and exaggerate certain features. Thus, buyers could start question intentions of the company, which might potentially lead to a decrease in customer satisfaction due to distrust, and therefore, to the loss of the consumer. To give an example many retailers mislead consumers by providing exaggerated images and product descriptions, which creates high expectations about product characteristics, which subsequently leads to negative disconfirmation, and therefore to

complete distrust of the company. This underlines the fact that any deception always leads to negative attitudes (Held & Germelmann, 2018).

To summarize the formation of consumer attitude, there are 3 processes, such "cognition", "affect" and "behavior", nevertheless, it is important to highlight type of consumer attitude can be easily altered both in the negative and in the positive direction by any external factors such as media, internet, experiences of people who are surrounded.

In conclusion, from the previously brought up studies we can see that people hold negative attitude towards the product and company once they find out that they have been misled, and we can see that the attempts to influence people by label of the product it does not play a major role when it comes to which product to accept. At the same time, we can see it is almost used by every major company to make their product appealing by using different vague terms and increase the sales of the product. It takes in different forms and methods. For that reason, there are several specified methods how deceptive marketing takes place, such as is falsity, omission when companies do not publish certain types of product information, and implication, when people are misled by misconception the product.

Several authors also attempted to categorize the deceptive labels but in more details. In general, we see that there are five types of deceptive labels that are used on products, even though several authors categorized in different manner, the main message still carries similar meaning which is influence the decision-making process of costumers and make them to belief that they are making the right decision by purchasing their product. From the previous studies and literatures, it had been concluded that in general most people stated the information on the food labels is quite advanced and have overall difficulties in comprehending the vague terms.

In terms decision making process, most of the respondents stated that based on their final decision is based on their experience, rather than following ethics, and most importantly only a small number of participates stated that they read the information on the label. At the same time, we can see from those studies indicated that men are relatively less selective when it comes to comprehending information compared to women have deeper analyze of details. It is also important to summarize that the younger generation tend to be more skeptical towards the product label, compared to elder generation, people who hold relatively smaller levels of education, and as well as unmarried people are the most vulnerable group when it comes in being deceived by misleading advertising.

2. Empirical part

In the empirical part of the thesis, author proceeds to a descriptive and analytical chapter to define the methodology and sample size of the survey. After that it is followed up by the analysis of the survey SPSS for chi square analysis. After the analysis of the survey author summarize the findings and comes up with the suggestions and concludes with the conclusion.

2.1. The methodology and sample size of survey

The author used survey design to distribute the survey. Therefore, it was conducted using Google Forms, as it is the most convenient platform for collecting survey data, which offers an unlimited set of questions, secure backups, and anonymity for free of charge. In total it contained 13 questions, each question has been thoroughly chosen under supervision of supervisor and attempted to be closely alighted to the aim of the thesis. Author focused on how well people understand the information on food packages and determine when people accept and avoid certain products with misleading labels. The survey had a short heading with the importance of participation as well description and purpose of the thesis. Additionally, included a short summary of the topic to make it easier for participant follow through questions. Highlighting, a clarification that the answers are collected anonymously, and the gathered data is be used for research purposes for a bachelor's thesis, and participants must reside in Estonia.

Consequently, before distribution, the pilot survey was set to a small group of people to get as much criticism as possible to improve the quality and comprehension level of questions. After a week of testing, there were no changes that required to be altered. As a result of the course of four weeks from October 8th-Novemver 5th, 2021, there were a total of 89 respondents, although the initial goal was to get more than 100 responses since the author had to stop sharing it with more people due to time constraints.

First set of questions is chosen because it is intended to focus on the influence people's decision-making process, including their general thoughts regarding "health benefit statement", and most importantly when people accept and avoid certain products with misleading labels. The title of the first question was "Do you find that the information on the front label of the product is accurate enough?". Participants were given 4 options: 'always', 'occasionally', 'rarely' and 'never'.

The next statement was 'It is not ethical for companies to use deceptive marketing campaigns to promote their products'. The author chose the next question because, as mentioned earlier, due to the purpose of the thesis, to gain some degree of understanding of

whether people in Estonia consider it ethical or unethical for companies to use misleading labels to attract customers. It is important to understand how often people are faced with transparent labels on products and how much consumers trust companies. The options were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'undecided', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree'.

The following question focused on whether they were familiar with certain popular terms with confused interpretations. The author asked: "Please assess how much you are aware of the true meaning of words such as 'premium, 'completely natural', gluten ', 'natural flavor'". There were three options in total: 'excellent', 'somewhat' 'poor'. According to the study (Abrams & Meyers, 2010), chosen words indeed may confuse many people, and based on this study, the author chose these words to measure and get an idea of the knowledge of these terms.

With question number 4, the author intended to get an opinion on the main factor influencing people's decision to buy any product. It is important to understand, whether appealing labels play the role while purchasing a product where a dozen alternatives are offered by competitors, if the driven reason is not the label, it is important to know other key factors that play a role while purchasing a product.

A total of 3 main factors were presented, namely: 'design and health claim on the packaging', 'price' and 'ingredients', including the choice of 'other', where people could write if it does not correspond to their reasons. The option 'design and health claim on the packaging' was chosen, because in the theoretical part the author brought up several studies where it was mentioned that health benefits claim also known as a 'halo effect' and the general packaging design play tend to have a misleading purpose for customers in the decision-making process. At the same time, the "price" option was chosen by the author because, from the author's point of view, it could be a potential driven factor in motivating people to accept a product, whether it contains a misleading label or not. The price of the product is assumed to be the main reason people choose a particular product because of socio-economic factors for the reason. It has been said that the income of 20% of the Estonian higher class is generated five times bigger than the income of 20% of the lower income class population (Thiele, 2018). As we see, within the country there is a significant difference in income between the high- and low-income groups. Finally, an 'ingredients' option was provided to see how many people would prefer to read the food nutrition table. It was chosen because the younger generation is inclined towards healthier lifestyles and prefers to accept ethically produced products and the ingredients that do not contain any potentially harmful elements (Sudbury, Kohlbacher, Hofmeister, 2015).

The next question is focused on ethics and consumption. The author asked, 'What role does ethics play in decision-making when purchasing products?' which contained 3 answer options: 'important', 'slightly', 'not important'. A question that again raised ethical standards was chosen to survey consumers' perspectives on whether they believe they are violating ethical standards this time by knowingly accepting a product with misleading labels. Therefore, it's important to know what people will do when they find out they are being misled. Simultaneously, this question is related to the previous one, because the results may support the author's initial assumptions that ethics is not an important factor to consumers if the price is affordable.

After that, the author wanted to dive further to get a general perception of the effect of misleading labels, namely whether it affects people in general. The terms 'freshly picked' and 'natural flavor' were used as examples because the meaning of these terms is vague for everyone and, evidently, is used to make the product more attractive to the consumer.

Next question was about whether labels on that are used daily must be transparent. It was asked to get the help in understanding the perception and attitude towards their personal products that they consume on daily basis.

In the last question, the author asked a similar question but this time about products that are not used daily "I do not mind if I buy a product with misleading claims products that are not used daily". This was asked with the intention of showing how people see the transparency of products that are not used daily. The options were the same as in the previous question. However, the responses of the participants varied significantly. List of full questions can be viewed in appendix part of the thesis as an 'Appendix A'.

Overall, Table 5 shows social demographical data of survey participants. As it shows, almost everyone was from Estonia. Women made up more than a half and a little below half were men, while a small minority preferred not to say. As the focus group was people aged 20-34, while looking at the age group, age, resulting in three quarters of people aged 20-34 and almost a third of people under 20, although no respondents were over 34. Next people had to indicate the level of education they have completed so far. The answer options were 'high school', 'bachelor's degree', 'master's degree', 'PhD or higher. Correspondingly, the vast majority have completed high school, which made more than a half of respondents, after that comes bachelor's degree with less than a third and one in ten of people hold master's degree. In the final part people indicated whether their student or employment status hence large number consisted of a fulltime student which belongs to half of responses, followed by

full-time less than a third of people and less than a fifth confirmed that they work part-time and lasty small minority indicated that they are a part-time student and not employed to pay.

Table 5

Social demographical data of survey participants

Characteristic	Category	Respondents' percent	Respondents' number
Gender	Female	55.2%	48
	Male	41.4%	36
	Prefer not to say	3.4%	3
Age group	Below 20	28%	25
	20-34	71%	62
Education	High school	55.2%	48
	Bachelors and higher	44.8%	39
Employment/student status	Full time student	50.6%	44
	Part time student	2.3%	2
	Full time employed	29.9%	26
	Part time employed	2.3%	2
Country of residence	Estonia	97.3%	82
	Elsewhere	5.7%	5

Source: complied by the author

The method for disseminating the survey was slated to snowball across multiple social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram considering it is the fastest way to reach people. Regardless, while collecting data, author faced several limitations, to give an instance author could not control who participate in the survey, since it was aimed at Estonian residences, there have been a few people who were mentioned they reside elsewhere. Author assumes the distribution method might have caused the failure to reach that age group, since the most active users of social media tend to be people who are younger than 34. For empirical studies, a quantitative approach was used. Survey response data is analyzed using IBM SPSS, the chi-square non-parametric test methodology was used to find associations between chosen variables, namely whether there are certain tendencies between men and women, people who hold high school degree and bachelor's and higher and lastly find associations between people who are over 20-34 years old and under 20.

2.2. Analysis of survey results

In this subchapter, the author presented a total of 3 tables were analyzed in detail the overall survey responses, then the most observed responses in the survey, followed by a chi-

square analysis to show if there are any associations between the selected variables and concluded it with a survey summary.

   To begin with the total survey responses from the answers of Table 6 we can see that in general, the responses are divided into only two categories. The vast majority, accounting for 71.3%, said that 'occasionally' they see sufficiently accurate information on food labels, and the remaining 28.7% are indicated 'rarely'. Which assumes that 100% of people are aware that the information on the front label may not always live up to expectations.

   The answers for the second question have more varied responses than the previous question. As a result, a significant number of people decided to 'strongly agree' and 'agree', accounting for more than a half with a total of 65% of responses. Meanwhile, around 20% said they 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. At the same time, 17% of people preferred to remain indecisive. As we can see, most people agree that fraudulent campaigns violate the basic principles of ethics to mislead people to make a profit, while almost a quarter of the respondents chose to disagree with this statement, therefore, from the perspective of these respondents, such campaigns do not violate ethics, at the same time, a minority of people chose to remain in uncertainty about the following

   The third question concentrated on familiarity of certain popular terms with confused interpretations. Looking at the data, it clearly shows that people have a general knowledge of these terms. As a result, the 'somewhat' choice makes up a large proportion, accounting for two-third of responses with 66% while 15% chose excellent and almost a fifth said they were unfamiliar with the terms which accounts for 19%. Therefore, a vast majority of people somewhat know the meanings of popular terms that are used by companies to make their products more appealing to consumers. To compare the results from the research that had been brought up in theoretical part we can see several similarities, to give an instance a study that had been conducted by (Wandel, 1997), in their study most people also had problems understanding the terminologies that food labels had and viewed the information on it very advanced. And we can see the same tendencies from the research results that was done by the author of this thesis.

   Next question brings the opinion on the main factor influencing people's decision to buy any product. Leading to expected results where a large proportion indicated that price plays an important role in product choice decisions with 59%, the second highest percentage is among the ingredients that takes 32%, and a small proportion of respondents stated that 'packaging design' and 'health claim' with only 9%. This leads us to assume that having an honest or misleading label will not be critical factor when purchasing a product.

The responses for the next question provided additional evidence, where for the majority claimed that ethics does not play an important role in consumer consumption. Resulting, 'not important' and 'slightly important' account for three quarters of the total 76%, while a small proportion 24% of the respondents answered that ethics plays an important role.

More similar results with another study that had been brought up in theoretical part. According to (Borrelli, Patel, & Fagan, 2012), they concluded that in most of the respondents' decision-making process based on their experience, rather than ethics, at the same time only a small fraction of the participants read the information on the label. In comparison, respondents from Estonia had the similar attitude, and the driven factor for purchasing a product was a price rather than label or ethics.

After that, the author wanted to dive further to get a general perception of the effect of misleading labels, namely whether it affects people in general. Which resulted, 70% of people answered that they will 'probably buy' and 9% stated that they would 'definitely buy'. Meanwhile, 21% said 'probably not'.

Several other articles and studies that were noted in the empirical part of this paper, to give an instance how most customers do not know the exact definition of words such as 'organic', 'n% fiber' or 'GMO-free' (Janssen & Hamm, 2011) and we can highlight the same tendencies from the Estonian residences. And most interestingly, Estonian respondents would continue to buy it in a situation where the packaging states that the tea is 'natural flavored' and 'freshly picked'. Proving that people would accept a product with a misleading label on it, concluding that the price plays the major factor whether label is transparent or misleading meanwhile respondents expect the labels on products that are used daily must be fair and transparent

The next question included the options 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree'. On the contrary, the answers to this question went in the opposite direction. According to the chart below, 100% of the respondents answered positively and agreed that the labeling of important products should be transparent.

In the last question, the author asked a similar question but this time about products that are not used daily. In general, the answer for this question clearly shows that many people agreed that they had nothing against purchasing products that are not used daily with a misleading label, which totaled 46%, whereas just under a half with 41% disagreed with this statement.

Table 6

Survey responds

		Respondents' Percent	Respondents' Number
Do you find that the information on the front label of the product is accurate enough?	Occasionally	71.3%	62
	Rarely	28.7%	25
It is not ethical for companies to use deceptive marketing campaigns to promote their products.	Strongly Disagree	4.6%	4
	Disagree	14.9%	13
	Undecided	17.2%	15
	Agree	44.8%	39
	Strongly Agree	18.4%	16
Please assess how much you are aware of the true meaning of words such as 'premium, 'completely natural', 'healthy choice', 'natural taste'.	Poor	19.5%	17
	Somewhat	65.5%	57
	Excellent	14.9%	13
Which of the following decision-making factors are most important?	Price	58.6%	51
	Ingredients	32.2%	28
	General design and health claims on label	9.2%	8
What role does ethics play in decision-making when purchasing products?	Not Important	20.7%	18
	Slightly Important	55.2%	48
	Important	24.1%	21
Do you continue to buy it in a situation where you want to buy flavored tea and the packaging states that the tea is 'natural flavored' and 'freshly picked'?	Probably Not	20.7%	18
	Probably	70.1%	61
	Definitely	9.2%	8
Labels on products that are used daily products must be fair and transparent	Agree	70.1%	61
	Disagree	29.9%	26
I do not mind if I buy a product with misleading claims on products that are not used daily	Strongly Disagree	8.0%	7
	Disagree	41.4%	36
	Agree	46.0%	40
	Strongly Agree	4.6%	4

Source: author's calculations

In general, most people stated that they find occasionally accurate enough information on the front label of the product and agree that it is not ethical for companies to use deceptive marketing. Although they are somewhat aware of meanings of the vague terms that are used by companies on the packages of the products, while a quarter have a poor understanding. Furthermore, we see that the price plays the major role in decision making process, while

ethics doesn't play a big role or not important at all for most of the people. Nevertheless, people expect a transparency from the companies on products that are used daily, however respondents' opinion was divided when it came to transparent labels on the products that are not used daily.

After that a chi squares analysis had been done for each question to find associations between chosen variables. Hence, it is found that there is no association between the first question and demographic variables gender, age group and education level. As well as for the second question the result of the Chi Squares test of association indicates that there is no association between the second question and demographic variables gender, age group and education level. At the same time, the next question was about whether they are aware of the true meaning of certain vague words and the Chi Squares test of association it stated that there is no association between the third question and demographic variables gender, age group and education level. For the next question the author focused on the decision-making factors. As we see from the Chi Squares test of association indicates that there is also no association between the fourth question and demographic variables gender, age group, and education level. Including the following question was about the role that ethics play in decision-making and the result shows that there is no association between the fifth question and demographic variables gender, age group, and education level. For the next question, the Chi Square test indicates that there is no association between the sixth question and demographic variables gender, age group, and education group. After that the author asked whether labels on products that are used daily must be fair and transparent, as we see there is no association between seventh question and demographic variables gender, age group and education level. The last question was about whether people do not mind if they buy a product with misleading claims on products that are not used daily and based on demographic variables age group and education levels there is no association between them. For the last question, the Chi Square test indicates that there is association between question eight and gender the p value is less than 0.05.

The associations are justified through p values which are more than 0.05 means no associations. As we see there are no associations between variables in each question, in another words, there are no indications whether certain age, gender and education background have tendencies to vote certain way, so we cannot conclude which variable tends to accept or avoid misleading labels.

Table 7

Chi square and P-value of the survey results.

Question	Gender	Age	Education
1. Do you find that the information on the front label of the product is accurate enough.	$\chi^2 = .424$ p=.809	$\chi^2 = 1.307$ p=.253	$\chi^2 = .730,$ p=.393
2. It is not ethical for companies to use deceptive marketing campaigns to promote their products.	$\chi^2 =5.360$ p=.252	$\chi^2 = 1.212,$ p=.546.	$\chi^2 = 2.439$ p=.295
3. Please assess how much you are aware of the true meaning of words such as 'premium', 'completely natural', 'healthy choice', 'natural taste'.	$\chi^2 = 3.550$ p=.470	$\chi^2 = .420$ p=.979	$\chi^2 = .783$ p=.676
4. Which of the following decision-making factors are most important?	$\chi^2 = 3.985$ p=.408	$\chi^2 = .721$ p=.697	$\chi^2 = 1.113,$ p=.573
5. What role does ethics play in decision-making when purchasing products?	$\chi^2 =8.132$ p=.870	$\chi^2 =1.878,$ p=.391	$\chi^2 = .250$ p=.882
6. Do you continue to buy it in a situation where you want to buy flavor ed tea and the packaging states that the tea is 'natural flavored' and 'freshly picked'?	$\chi^2 =2.509$ p=.643	$\chi^2 =1.148$ p=.563	$\chi^2 =4.523$ p=.104
7. Labels on products that are used daily products must be fair and transparent.	$\chi^2 = 9.184$ p=.010	$\chi^2 =.075$ p=.784	$\chi^2 = .026$ p=.871
8. I do not mind if I buy a product with misleading claims on products that are not used daily.	$\chi^2 =8.143$ p=.228	$\chi^2 =4.648$ p=.199	$\chi^2 =4.230,$ p=.238

Source: author's calculations

As you can see the analysis showed that there are no differences in statistical meaning. According to Appendix B, in details summarizes the survey results. As it has been pointed out is divided by the questions, answer choices that were given and by three variables such as gender, age, and education. The table shows only the description of the total number of how variables answered to each question. For that reason, author will draw conclusions based on the whole sample.

Number of women who stated that they are aware of the real meaning is smaller compared to men. Simultaneously, both genders equally stated that they have some knowledge, and equally indicated that price is the factor that determines the final decision. In case of ingredient option, a greater number of women chose that the ingredients are the factors to determine. Correspondingly, it is important to underline that both genders almost equally agreed to probably accept the flavored tea with a vague term and almost equally both

indicated that ethics are slightly important. Nevertheless, greater number of women strongly indicated that ethics are the most important.

When it comes to the age category, half of the respondents above 20 years old accepted that price is the major factor in decision making and stated that the ethics plays important role. As it might be seen, almost a half of the respondents of the same age category showed an interest to buy a flavored tea with vague terms. Although, numbers of the category that is below 20 years old is relatively higher when it comes to the option 'disagree' to buy a product with misleading claims on nonessential products and we can see that most of the respondent of the age category agree with a transparency on label of the products that they buy on a daily basis.

In case of the category of education, it shows that the 80% of the total respondent with were people who hold bachelor's and above degrees. They stated that price is the most important factor to determine a purchase decision and stated. Having said that, numbers of respondents who hold high school and bachelor's and higher degrees are almost equal when it comes in deciding to opt of probable accept favored tea with a vague term and as well numbers are equal in option 'agree' to accept a product with misleading claims on nonessential products, nevertheless, number is slighter greater in among high school degree.

To summarize the empirical chapter, we can see that there are no associations between each question and variables. As a result, the conducted study overall gives us an opportunity to get an overview of perception of Estonian residents towards deceptive labels and when they accept and avoid misleading products. Simply put in another way, Estonian residents are aware that companies can use deceptive labels and most importantly, most of the respondents accept the misleading labels and would not avoid buying a product with vague claims. Nevertheless, vast majority of respondents stated they expect transparent labels from products that they personally use on daily basis. In the meantime, the product label is not a major factor in the decision-making process as they continue to accept and knowingly buy a product with a misleading label as long as the product is affordable for consumption. As it was found out that the product affordability is a driven factor for people to purchase a product.

Conclusion

Marketing is one of the key elements of any successful enterprises. As part of a strong campaign, marketers need to make a strong and lasting impact on consumer needs. By doing so, food companies tend to over-exaggerate technically vague terms like 'healthy choice', 'good for the immune system', and 'natural' to make their product more attractive to an

audience. As it was previously noted, ethics provided divided answers and there is no 'right' or 'good' answer. Since the utilitarian theory argues that manipulation itself is neither good nor bad, and only its consequences make it right or wrong and consequentialism justifies manipulative outcomes as a vital source of employee income, organizational profits, and taxes. For that reason, if it does no harm to anyone, manipulation is technically acceptable. On the other hand, the concept of non-consequentialism, claims treatment of customers must be fair, even if it could have negative consequences for company's finances or economy. Therefore, it makes us conclude that ethical point of view is certainly unbiased and there is not one universal answer from ethics point of view where author could lead towards his opinion.

As it was discussed in the theoretical part, the reasons why companies choose misleading campaigns, is because by provoking people's vulnerability, they attempt to block the consumer's rational thinking and replace it with decisions based solely on emotions. Accordingly, as it was aimed to get the perception of Estonian residents and how people respond and understand the products with misleading labels hence from the survey, we can see that everyone is aware that information on the label is not a safe place to trust yet they will not avoid buying if they see vague terms, the definitions of which are not known to them because the price influences final decision. In case of the statistical significance between different variables such as education, gender and age, there were no statistically significant associations, consequently we cannot conclude which variable tends to more to accept or avoid misleading labels than the other.

As we see, even if companies use transparent labels, it will not make a huge impact on average consumer, having said that author assumes the reason that price plays a major role is the relation to the socio-economic factors of the country and the economic situation of the participants, since half of them turned out to be full-time students. This leads the author to conclude that product affordability takes over the ethical consumption from consumers and ethical treatment towards consumers by companies. Notwithstanding, participants still expected transparency from companies regarding products they personally used daily, which, from the author's point of view, is a reasonable choice as companies should not mislead people when it comes to products that provide maintaining the health of consumers. As for the role of ethics, in general it does not play a big role for people, since for half of the respondents indicated that role of ethics is slightly important, and for the other quarter of answers stated that it is not at all important, while from the point of view of gender

differences, the number of women was greater in terms of concerns of role of ethics compared to number of men.

As a part of the suggestion, the author recommends to participants accept the products that best suit their health and financial preferences, people should not neglect their health to buy cheaper products. Ideally, people should purchase according to their opinion what is the best suited product to consume, only then price should play a role. Having said that, every company must design transparent labels whether consumers notice it or not, because trust in marketing is already extremely low. For the reason misleading labels will ultimately have a negative impact on the company's image particularly if they seek to have a credible image among other similar products on the store shelf. As the theoretical studies have confirmed, that when a company turns out to be deceiving, the future process of buying a product from a consumer's point of view will change significantly, since false advertising creates negative attitudes towards consumers and companies.

Since author of theses planning a future career that focuses on marketing and its analytics; the brought up issues are important to the author to understand future dilemmas of uncertainty and moral conflicts such as whether to promote manipulative tactics to get a profit or rather instead avoid it are faced in marketing industry. As it was mentioned before, for the past years there has been a shift in the market that prioritizes the political correctness and listens to customers. Hopefully, this thesis could potentially raise awareness of how often consumers are deceived by companies to deceive into thinking that people are making the right decision when buying certain product, thus it could be valuable in informing about these deceptive tactics that consumers face and for future graduating students who want to focus their career on the field of marketing and who would like to work in strategic marketing, to be aware that audience does not have trust in marketing and that most decision-making processes are not strongly influenced by label of the product. As it turns out to be, price and personal experience are driven factors for people to consume.

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Appendix A Survey questions

1. Do you find the information on the product labels accurate enough?
   a) Always
   b) Very Frequently
   c) Occasionally
   d) Rarely
   e) Never

2. It is not ethical for companies to use deceptive marketing campaigns to promote their products
   a) Strongly Agree
   b) Agree
   c) Undecided
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly Disagree

3. Please assess how much you are aware of the true meaning of words such as 'premium', 'completely natural', 'healthy choice', 'natural taste'.
   a) Excellent
   b) Somewhat
   c) Poor

4. Which of the following decision-making factors are most important?
   a) General design and health claims on the label
   b) Ingredients
   c) Price
   d) Other

5. What role does ethics play in decision-making when purchasing products?
   a) Important
   b) Slightly Important
   c) Not Important

6. Do you continue to buy it in a situation where you want to buy flavored tea and the packaging states that the tea is 'natural flavored' and 'freshly picked'?
   a) Definitely
   b) Probably
   c) Probably Not
   d) Definitely Not

7. Labels on products that are used on a daily must be fair and transparent.
   a) Agree Strongly
   b) Agree
   c) Disagree
   d) Disagree Strongly

8. I do not mind if I buy a product with misleading claims on products aren't used on a daily.
   a) Agree Strongly
   b) Agree
   c) Disagree
   d) Disagree Strongly

9 Do you live in Estonia?
   a) Yes
   b) No

10. The gender that you identified is
   a) Female
   b) Male

c) Prefer not to say
11. What is your age?
    a) Below 20
    b) 20 - 34 years old
    c) 34+
12. The highest level of education you have completed?
    a) a) High School
    b) Bachelor's Degree
    c) Master's Degree
    d) Ph.D. or higher
    e) Other
13. Which of these describe you?
    a) Full-time employed
    b) Part-time employed
    c) Not employed for pay
    d) Caregiver (e.g., children, elderly)
    e) Full-time student
    f) Part-time student
    g) Other

Source: compiled by author

Appendix B Percentage of the survey responses with demographics.

Question	Answer choice	Gender		Age		Education	
		Female	Male	Below 20 Years	20-34 Years	High School	Bachelor's and higher
1. Do you find that the information on the front label of the product is accurate enough	Occasionally	37.9%	31.0%	23.0%	48.3%	41.4%	29.9%
	Rarely	17.2%	10.3%	5.7%	23.0%	13.8%	14.9%
2. It is not ethical for companies to use deceptive marketing campaigns to promote their products	Disagree	6.9%	12.6%	4.6%	14.9%	10.3%	9.2%
	Agree	37.9%	23.0%	17.2%	46.0%	32.2%	31.0%
	Undecided	10.3%	5.7%	6.9%	10.3%	12.6%	4.6%
3. Please assess how much Poor you are aware of the true meaning of words such as 'premium', 'completely	Poor	9.2%	10.3%	5.7%	13.8%	12.6%	6.9%
	Somewhat	35.6%	27.6%	18.4%	47.1%	34.5%	31.0%
	Excellent	10.3%	3.4%	4.6%	10.3%	8.0%	6.9%

	natural', 'healthy choice', 'natural taste'.					
4. Which of the following decision-making factors are most important?	Price	29.9%	27.6%	14.9%	43.7%	33.3%	25.3%
	Ingredients	20.7%	9.2%	10.3%	21.8%	18.4%	13.8%
	General design and health claims on the label	4.6%	4.6%	3.4%	5.7%	3.4%	5.7%
5. What role does ethics play in decision-making when purchasing products?	Not Important	6.9%	12.6%	6.9%	13.8%	10.3%	10.3%
	Slightly Important	29.9%	24.1%	12.6%	42.5%	31.0%	24.1%
	Important	18.4%	4.6%	9.2%	14.9%	13.8%	10.3%
6. Do you continue to buy it in a situation where you want to buy flavor ed tea and the packaging states that the tea is 'natural flavored' and 'freshly picked'?	Probably Not	12.6%	6.9%	8.0%	12.6%	12.6%	8.0%
	Probably	35.6%	32.2%	18.4%	51.7%	34.5%	35.6%
	Definitely	6.9%	2.3%	6.9%	9.2%	8.0%	1.1%
7. Labels on products that are used daily must be fair and transparent.	Agree	36.8%	33.3%	19.5%	50.6%	39.1%	31.0%
	Disagree	18.4%	8.0%	9.2%	20.7%	16.1%	13.8%
8. I do not mind if I buy a product that aren't used daily with misleading claims	Strongly Disagree	4.6%	2.3%	4.6%	3.4%	6.9%	1.1%
	Disagree	20.7%	18.4%	13.8%	27.6%	23.0%	18.4%
	Agree	25.3%	20.7%	9.2%	36.8%	21.8%	24.1%
	Strongly Agree	4.6%	0.0%	1.1%	3.4%	3.4%	1.1%

Source: author's calculations

Resümee

MANIPULEERIMINE TURUNDUSES:PETLIKE TOIDUMÄRGISTE

AKTSPETEERIMINE

Arman Altynkhan

Turundus on iga eduka ettevõtte üks olulisi osi. Paljud turundajad püüavad luua tarbijalepüsivat mõju, mille põhieesmärk on oma müüki kasvatada, tehes seda paljudel juhtudel valivad ettevõtted inimesi eksitada. See töö keskendub sellele, kuidas ettevõtted muudavad oma toodet erinevate ebamääraste terminite abil ahvatlevaks ja suurendavad sellega toote müüki. Inimeste haavatavust provotseerides püüavad nad blokeerida tarbija ratsionaalse mõtlemise ja asendada selle üksnes emotsioonidel põhinevate otsustega. Poliitkorrektsuse prioriteedi ja klientide tugeva hääle ja nõudmiste tõttu korrigeeritakse turunduskampaaniaid pidevalt. Kriitiline on mõista klientide arusaamu ja tagasisidet toidumärgistuse pettuse kohta ning turunduse eetika rikkumiste uurimine ning kliendi rahulolu taseme mõistmine on turundus valdkonnas tegutseda sooviva inimese jaoks esmatähtis. Selle tulemusena defineeris autor pettuse ja manipuleerimise erinevused ning tuvastas petlike siltide tüübid. Pärast seda tõi välja uuringud, mis viidi läbi selleks, et mõista, kuidas inimesed tajuvad ja aktsepteerivad petlikke silte. Ja lõpuks viis ta läbi oma uuringu petlike toidumärgiste aktsepteerimise ja tajumise kohta, mida viidi läbi küsitluse vormis. Uuringu tulemused näitasid, et inimesed on petlikest siltidest teadlikud ja aktsepteerivad eksitavad märgistused ega ei väldiks ebamääraste väidetega toote ostmist, kuid valdav enamus vastajatest väitis, et nad eeldavad läbipaistvat märgistust toodetelt, mida nad isiklikult kasutavad igapäevaselt. Samal ajal ei ole toote märgistus otsustamisprotsessis oluline tegur, kuna eksitava märgistusega toodet aktsepteeritakse ja ostetakse teadlikult seni, kuni toode on tarbimiseks taskukohane. Selgus, et toote taskukohasus on inimeste jaoks toote ostmisel ajendatud tegur.

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Manipulation in marketing: Acceptance of deceptive food labels

supervised by

Anne Reino

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Arman Altynkhan

13/01/2022